University of Alberta

Images of Women in *Ming* (1368-1644) Fiction: The *Femmes Fatales* in *Sanyan Erpai*

by

Karen Kar Wai Lam ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Chinese Literature

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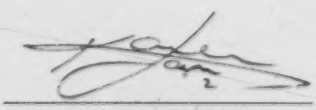

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Dr. Jenn-Shann Jack Lin, Supervisor

Dr. Jennifer Jay

Dr. Richard John Lynn

20 August, 1999

In memory of my grandmother,

Ho Tai Ping

Dedication

This thesis is specially dedicated to my grandmother Ho Tai Ping, who left the world before I could tell her about my research. To my parents, Lam Sie Nien and Leung Chui Fan, and to my sister Debby and brother Kevin, who always support me in every way, and to my husband Henry Chen, who endured the constant separation patiently and at the same time never ceased to encourage, inspire and love me, so that I can pursue my goals.

Abstract

This thesis examines the *femmes fatales* in two *Ming* anthologies -- Feng Menglong's *Sanyan* and Ling Mengchu's *Erpai* -- by focusing centrally on their nature and retributions as illustrated through the contents.

By categorizing their fictional beings into three types, namely the dispositional, the situational, and the deviational based on their atypical thoughts and behaviors, I would like to show that *femme fatale* cannot be viewed solely in a wholistic manner; different categories reflect the proportionality of retribution. There are forty-two female characters from forty stories that can be addressed as *femme fatales*. I will adopt fifteen stories with seventeen *femmes fatales* for my analysis.

Chapter one is the background to the two anthologies, the *femmes fatales* and retributions. Chapter two provides an analysis of the three types of *femme fatale*. Chapter three is the synopses of the stories referred to in Chapter two.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Dr. Jenn-Shann Jack Lin and Dr. Jennifer Jay for their constant support, guidance, insights and encouragement. Especially to Dr. Jay, thank you for all your time, patience and valuable thesis advice: "remember the big picture and the linkages." To Dr. Richard John Lynn, I would like to express my gratitude for instructing me in research methodology and in training in reading Classical Chinese. Thanks are also extended to all the staff, especially to Sharon MacKenzie and Heather McDonald.

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Chapter One

An Overview of *Sanyan Erpai, femmes fatales* and retribution

This thesis is a study of *femmes fatales* in Feng Menglong's 馮夢龍 (1574-1646) *Sanyan* 三言 (The Three Words)[1] and Ling Mengchu's 凌濛初 (1580-1644) *Erpai* 二拍 (The Two Strikes), two works of *Ming* 明 (1368-1644) vernacular fiction. It classifies these *femme fatales* into three types ("dispositional," "situational," and "deviational") and discusses them in the context of retribution. The extent to which the female protagonist's devious behavior injures her victim results in a proportional response to the harmful acts, with the most severe penalty being expulsion of the *femme fatale* to the underworld. A selection of didactic stories from *Sanyan* and *Erpai* will be used to illustrate the discussion.

The thesis begins by discussing the emergence of *Sanyan Erpai* in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century China, followed by an overview of the nature and history of the *femme fatale*. The concept of retribution will then be presented. Chapter Two analyzes the three types of *femmes fatales*, their manipulative strategies, and the resulting retribution they receive.

I. THE EMERGENCE OF *SANYAN ERPAI* IN THE *MING* DYNASTY

In sixteenth-and seventeenth-century China, the blooming of commerce and industry, "supported by agriculture in rural districts, brought wealth and prosperity … and spurred the rise of a populous urban middle class who had plenty of leisure

[1] I adopt the English translations for the headings *Sanyan* 三言, *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說, *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言, *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言, *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言, *Erpai* 二拍 and *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 from Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1986), edited by Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau.

and opportunities for relaxation and light reading."[2] The rise and growth of urban culture (in the *Yangzi* 揚子 cities of *Hangzhou* 杭州, *Suzhou* 蘇州 and *Nanjing* 南京), with an associated increase in its economic affluence, had two results: demands for a new vernacular literature (fiction and drama) and entertainment. These two innovative occurrences complemented each other. Given the high percentage of illiteracy among the common people during traditional times, the popularizing of reading would certainly have failed if the knowledge transmitted had been confined to classical forms. Thus, required in response to the urgent needs of the new cultural movement required a new form of education: a vernacular mode. Previously restricted to the exclusive audience of the well-educated elite class, orthodox Neo-Confucian teachings could now be disseminated among all levels of society, and particularly among the less-educated common people.

On the surface, the development of vernacular literature and entertainment seemed to echo the cultural and socioeconomic changes. However, their nearly simultaneous development is related to the rapid growth of late *Ming* society. Shelley Chang explains this phenomenon as resulting from the abrupt changes that "were replacing … rational man with a more dangerous and mercurial urban man. This urban man, or modern man, was not merely a rational creature but a human being of feeling and instinct. … Yet it was precisely this emphasis on feeling and instinct that was ascribed as the cause of the moral decline of the late *Ming* society by its early *Qing* Confucian critics."[3] Therefore, by both vernacular oral transmission and literary convention, by listening and reading, resulted in moral rectification.

During this period, two important writers, Feng Menglong and Ling Mengchu, responded to the call for moral rectification. By compiling and writing

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[2] Liu Wu-chi, An Introduction to Chinese Literature (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966) 213.
[3] Chang 186.

didactic vernacular fiction, Feng and Ling not only redefined and reinterpreted different established ethical values, but also used their imaginations and own moral standards to create their plots and characters. C. T. Hsia compares these authors' motives with those of earlier storytellers, the Buddhist priests of China, who were "affirming public morality with the aid of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist platitudes, and justifying the apparent inequities of the social order with the consolatory doctrine of karma or moral retribution." Agreeing with Hsia, McMahon states that "Often in seventeenth-century fiction, karmic relationships are actually thought of in terms of account-keeping, as in the expression "the Great Abacus of the Heavenly Lord *tiangong dasuanpan* 天公大算盤. Here, incidentally, *yinguo baoying* is a type of emblem of determinism."[4] However, when analyzing one of Feng's anthologies, Lewis Robinson offers a different view of the purpose of didactic literature: "On one level, these tales can be seen as anticlerical depictions of a declining morality; on another level, however, they explore real human emotions by depicting intimate details of sexual gratification, thereby satisfying a profound need within an audience repressed by Confucian norms of behavior."[5] Wu supports this observation: "The first thing that strikes a reader of these *Ming* stories and novels is their frankness regarding the sexual relationship, the treatment of which in a number of cases is obviously pornographic in nature."[6] At this point, one may doubt that this literature, with its inclusion of sexual content, was actually intended to be didactic. If the stories were designed to rectify bourgeois morality, then what is the purpose of all their erotic material? Is it possible, as McMahon naively assumes, that when reading an account of sexual intercourse, the readers hope to feel the same pleasure which the characters are presumably enjoying? The answer is clear. By including sexual

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[4] R. Keith McMahon, "Emblems of Causality in Late Ming Fiction," Chinese Studies 6.1 (1988): 352.
[5] Lewis S. Robinson, "Love and Sexual Gratification as Seen in Selected Stories of the *Hsing-shih heng-yen* 醒世恒言 [Lasting Words to Awaken the World] and the *Decameron*," Tamkang Review 16.4 (1986): 344.
[6] Liu, 213.

content in their stories, the writers underscore the causation of retribution, making the didactic message much clearer through the interplay; in Keith McMahon's words, "as a message, the *xiaoshuo* tells us that the orthodox way is never as interesting as what strays from that way; in other words, that the story is "interesting" because it shows how to "stray."[7]

Feng Menglong was born in 1574 and died in 1646. His style names were Youlong 猶龍 and Gongyu 公魚 and Ziyou 子猶; his aliases were *Mohanzhai Zhuren* 墨憨齋主人, *Cinu* 詞奴, and *Qian Zhou Zhushi* 前周柱史. Feng further changed his name to *Guqu Shanren* 顧曲散人, *Xiangyueju Zhuren* 香月居主人, *Zhanzhan Waishi* 詹詹外史, *Maoyuan Yeshi* 茂苑野史, *Lutianguan Zhuren* 綠天館主人, *Wu'ai Jushi* 無碍居士, and *Keyi Jushi* 可一居士. Little is known of his parents; he had one elder brother, Menggui 夢桂, a painter, and a younger brother, Mengxiong 夢熊, a poet. The three brothers were known as "*Wu xia san Feng*" 吳下三馮 (The Three Fengs of *Wu*). In 1630, Feng became a *Gongsheng* 貢生 (a senior licentiate), and in 1634, he was promoted to the level of the *Zhixian* 知縣 (a district magistrate) of *Shouning Xian* 壽寧縣 (the *Shouning* District) of *Funing Fu* 福寧府 (*Funing* Prefecture) of *Fujian* 福建. In addition to having a professional career, Feng also made an enormous contribution to folk songs, popular fiction and drama.

Each of the three volumes of Feng Menglong's *Sanyan* anthology, *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World), *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World), *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Lasting Words to Awaken the World), has forty *huaben* 話本 (vernacular stories). These one hundred and twenty stories were composed at different times by different authors. However, the stories "have all retained the oral conventions of story-telling, though a small number may not have been based

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[7] Robert Keith McMahon, The Gap in the Wall: Containment and Abandon in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction, diss., Princeton U, 1984, (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984) 3-4.

on prompt-books actually used by storytellers of the *Sung*, *Yuan*, and *Ming* dynasties."[8]

When Feng Menglong decided to compile his *Sanyan* anthology, he renamed his previous compilation, *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小說(Stories Old and New), published in 1620 or 1621, in later editions, to *Yushi mingyan*, in accordance with his two other subsequent collections, *Jingshi tongyan* and *Xingshi hengyan*. Thus, *Gujin xiaoshuo* and *Yushi mingyan* contain the same forty stories.

While *Jingshi tongyan* was published in 1624, *Xingshi hengyan* was published in 1627 and contains primarily *Ming* compositions. The biobibliographical notes of Ma and Lau's Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations state that Feng included at least twenty-two stories by Xi Langxian 席浪仙, the author of *Shidian tou* 石點頭 (The Nodding Stone), in order to have forty stories in each collection.

The immediate popularity of Feng Menglong stimulated Ling Mengchu (1580-1644) to also publish his own anthology, which imitates Feng's style. However, unlike Feng Menglong, who compiled his anthology by adopting a large number of stories from the *Sung* and *Yuan* periods, Ling wrote all eighty stories in his anthology.

Ling Mengchu's *Erpai* (The Two Strikes) is a two-volume collection consisting of *Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇(The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) published in 1628, and *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇(The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) published in 1632, each consisting of forty stories. *Erke paian jingqi* originally had only thirty-nine stories, with the last piece completed as a play.

The characters in the two hundred stories can be divided into two distinct types. According to Wu, these are the good and the bad, "with the latter intriguing

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[8] C. T. Hsia, "Society and Self in the Chinese Short Story," The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968) 306-7.

and plotting incessantly against the former. Tragedy results when the virtuous and innocent fall victim to the machinations of the wicked and evil; on the other hand, in spite of some near-tragic situations, everything ends well and happily with the triumph of the good and the punishment of the bad in accordance with folk justice."[9]

The publication purpose for Feng Menglong aimed at making money whereas Ling Mengchu's purpose was ambivalent. However, the common goal for both writers was to admonish their readers. Even though their moralizing influence came to an abrupt end with the fall of the *Ming* dynasty,[10] unlike Feng who continued to aware of the artistic merits of the colloquial story, whereas Ling seemed to be more concerned with the moralizing and didactic value of short fiction. Nevertheless, by covering every class of the society and every phase of Chinese life, the efforts of these two writers in correcting bourgeois morality still cannot be ignored.

II. THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF THE *FEMMES FATALES* IN CHINA AND *SANYAN ERPAI*

The term *femme fatale*, or "*hongyan huoshui* 紅顏禍水,"[11] refers to a class of ambitious and amoral temptresses who have existed for centuries in both East and West. The conduct of this class of malefactor is characterized by an incessant and remorseless pursuit of her own desires through an unerring and calculating manipulation of men. In all cases, the central theme illustrated by the outcome of this course of action is the inevitable retributive punishment for both the female protagonists and the lecherous men who pursue them, confirming the

[9] Wu 217.
[10] Liu 216.
[11] A discussion on this term can be found in the following section on "The Nature of the Chinese *Femme Fatale*" under "The Nature and History of *Femme Fatale* in China."

old adage in reference to beautiful women, "From of old, most pretty faces have been misfortunate in life 紅顏自古多薄命."

i. The Nature of the Chinese *Femme Fatale*

In referring to the "*femme fatale*," a popular expression has been "*hongyan huoshui*" 紅顏禍水 (The powdered face is the disastrous water). Such an affiliation with "*shui*" 水 (water) is first described in the traditional cosmology of *yinyang* 陰陽 in the *Yi Jing* 易經(Book of Changes): "the *yin* (*kun*) was associated with receptivity and passivity and was symbolized by such things as darkness, water, the moon, moisture and clouds."[12] The dangerous temperament of the *femme fatale*'s unstable nature, or "*shuixing*" 水性 (water or fickleness), can also be found in the old saying, "*Furen shuixin wuchang* 婦人水性無常"[13](The water nature of women is fickle).[14] Keith McMahon reflects this view of the *femme fatale* when he comments that "if let out or indulged, she is bound to become dangerous and overwhelming."[15]

The additional expression, "*qingguo qingcheng*" 傾國傾城(one who ruins country and city), or its alternative, "*qingcheng qingguo*" 傾城傾國(one who ruins city and country), is also widely used. In the *Shi Jing* 詩經, attributed to Confucius 孔子(551 BC - 479 BC), an allusion to these two interchangeable terms, which describe the unscrupulous actions of these women, occurs in Song No. 264. Here, the destructive power of *Baosi* 褒姒, as exerted upon King *You* 幽王, is powerfully depicted:

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[12] R. H. van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1974) 38.
[13] Feng Menglong, comp., "*Du Shiniang nuchen babao xiang*杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 (*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger)," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言(Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 395.
[14] Richard M. W. Ho, trans., "*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger," Ma and Lau 156.
[15] McMahon, T'oung Pao 218.

Clever men build cities,
  Clever women topple them.
Beautiful, these clever women,
  But they are owls, they are kites.
Women have long tongues,
  Stairways to ruin.
Disorder is not sent down from Heaven
  But bred by these women.
Impossible to teach, impossible to instruct,
  Such are women and eunuchs.[16]

Although both terms denote "a beauty with destructive power," when compared to "*hongyan huoshui*," neither "*qingguo qingcheng*" nor "*qingcheng qingguo*" carry the connotation of physical beauty as explicitly.

Extraordinary physical beauty, or "*hongyan*" 紅顏, is a prerequisite for the Chinese version of this type of women. This same "powdered face" must be present to "attract men by an aura of charm." The characteristics of "female dominance" and "unbridled female sexuality"[17] delineate the fine line between the dispositional and the remaining clusters of the situational and deviational types. These similar female constructs also utilize their aura of charm but go further by being able to lure men into dangerous or compromising situations. Committing adultery themselves, the latter two types in their control over lecherous men are unable to resist their own untamed desires.

In Keith McMahon's view, these types of situational and deviational beauties can be classified as "shrew," or "*Pofu*" 潑婦. "'*Pofu* [or] shrew'" is the caricature of the overflowing, male-enervating woman. This character metaphorically 'scatters' (*po*) her polluting fluids on the man, who [remains]

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[16] Burton Watson, Early Chinese Literature (New York: Columbia UP, 1962) 226.
[17] In her work The Chinese *Femme Fatale*: Stories from the *Ming* Period, Anne E. McLaren points out these two female traits reflect common Chinese fears of powerful, sexually aggressive women.

fragile unless he [is able to build] his defenses and masters her."[18] In addition, in order to physically remove the vital essence from the polygamous man, the sexually superior woman, recognized "as having the capacity for more pleasure than men,"[19] is more than capable of the mental manipulation of her male counterpart. Both his inherent weakness and the nature of lechery place the man in the hands of the temptress and unwittingly lead him to eventual self-destruction.

Another description of *femme fatale* emphasizes their destructive power: "The beautiful but morally questionable woman … is not only dangerous to others but also destructive to herself. No one having an amorous association with her is likely to emerge intact."[20] With the combination of her "powdered face," dominant nature, "unbridled female sexuality" and destructive potential, the *femme fatale* becomes capable of creating unbridled havoc with a virtually unrestricted devastating potential: "one glance from her could topple a city wall, another glance could topple a state."[21]

ii. The History of the *Femme Fatale* in China

a) The *Femme Fatale* Motif in Literature

A common variation of the concept of the *femme fatale* first appears in the literature of the fourth century A.D, but this adaptation of the familiar theme departs from the human world into that of the animal kingdom. Animal *femmes fatales* appear in *Zhiguai* 志怪 (The Tales of the Strange).[22] This narrative genre

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[18] Keith McMahon, Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction (Durham & London: Duke UP, 1995) 1.
[19] McMahon, T'oung Pao 219.
[20] Ma and Lau 303.
[21] From the footnote in McLaren 1.
[22] *Zhiguai* 志怪 (The Tales of the Strange), is described by Karl S. Y. Kao as " fictional narratives in classical language produced mainly during the Six Dynasties (317-589) and the *T'ang* (618-906)." Originating mainly in folk tradition, early *Zhiguai* were records of supernatural and fantastic phenomena. The *Zhiguai* in the Six Dynasties are considered as the "records" of facts and observable natural

then flourished, particularly during the Six Dynasties 六朝(317-589) and the *Tang* 唐(618-906) periods. The *hulijing* 狐狸精(the fox-fairy) is one type of animal transformation[23] occurring under the "Animistic phenomena"[24] and is a recurrent motif in the *guai* 怪phenomena. In these tales, the evil seductress transforms herself from a fox into a fairy-like being. By paying nightly visits to the gullible male, frequently represented by a scholar, the transformed *femme fatale* eventually destroys him by distracting him from his studies and ruining his health.

This motif of the fox-fairy lasts well into the *Song* 宋 (960-1279) and *Yuan* 元(1271-1368) dynasties. In the *huaben* 話本(vernacular fiction),[25] another animal typically appears: the snake. These snake-fairies are less seductive than the fox-fairies; nevertheless, they are capable of the same level of devastation.

Prior to the *Ming* 明dynasty, the *femme fatale* motif of "the seductive woman who brings ruin on monarch and state" had already appeared in portrayals of both imperial consorts and ladies of the elite. Women of the lower classes

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phenomena, in the form of relatively short pieces. A *Zhiguai* story usually features at least one non-human or a human with the attributes of a supernatural being. When there are other characters, they are normally ordinary humans. For a thorough discussion on the nature and narrative structures of the Six Dynasties' and the *Tang*'s *Zhiguai*, see the Introduction in Karl S. Y. Kao, Classical Chinese Tales of the Supernatural and the Fantastic: Selections from the Third to the Tenth Century (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1985) 1-51.

[23] The kinds of animal transformations and transformations of inanimate objects are *Yao* 妖, *jing* 精 (goblins and demons), *shangui* 山鬼 and *shuigui* 水鬼 (genii and nymphs), and *chimei* 魑魅 and *wangliang* 魍魎 (ogres, evil spirits of forests and waters). See Kao 8.

[24] "Animistic phenomena" is the third type of the "six basic constituent types of the supernatural and fantastic" identified by Kao. The other five types are 1. Portents and augury: irregularities in the natural order seen as portents or signs with cosmological significance, 2. Necromantic communion: manifestations of ghosts and spirits and pneumatological communication, 4. Communion with transcendent beings: manifestations of fairies and deities and their trafficking with humans, 5. Thaumaturgic phenomena: manifestations of magic feats and transformations associated with *fang-shih* 方士 (thaumaturges) and Taoist magicians, and 6. Retributive phenomena: divine retributions and miracles related to the Buddhist faith and native Chinese beliefs. See their further clarifications in Kao 5-11.

[25] *Huaben* 話本 are prompt-books used by professional storytellers during the middle of the Northern *Song* 北宋period. According to Karl S. Y. Kao in "*Bao* and *Baoying*: Narrative Causality and External Motivations in Chinese Fiction," in Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews, 11 (1989) 120, the plot in this genre "tends to be controlled strongly by the external motivation of ideological type." There are four salient features in the *huaben* stories: (1) use of the vernacular larded with the stock expressions of professional storytellers; (2) liberal admixture of colloquialisms and archaisms; (3) frequent inclusion of rhymed passages, idioms, or poems for narrative or descriptive purposes; (4) routine preamble before the feature story. See Ma and Lau xxii-iii.

emerge as fictional characters begin as early as in the *Song* 宋 dynasty.

b) The Iniquity of the *Femme Fatale* in Chinese History

In ancient China, the woman is placed in a position resulting in a denial of her self-identity. Her status depends on her father prior to marriage and upon her husband following it. The status of those fortunate ones who are selected and those unfortunate few who are dispatched into the palace to serve as imperial concubines depends on their own determination, cunning, and social skills. In the face of numerous rivals, the concubine's artifice as well as inherent beauty is required to win the emperior's favor. However, the concubine's attempt to gain attention and power results not only in the concubine's own death, but also in the dynasty's inevitable decline, as the following examples illustrate the imperial concubine's deadly powers.

As early as the *Zhou* 周 dynasty (1111-249 B.C.), women's acts of depravity and their desire for power, when combined with the insatiable sexual appetites of the equally corrupt emperors, caused downfall of countless states, and this has been chronologically recorded.

Baosi 褒姒, the beloved consort to King *You* 幽王 (r. 781-771 B.C.) of the *Zhou* 周 dynasty, leads the king to his death at the foothills of Mount *Li* 驪山. In order to win a smile from his melancholic concubine, King *You* offers a thousand ounces of gold to any person capable of making her smile. His chief minister suggests the lighting of the beacon fires to summon the feudal lords with their armies, under the pretence of an attack. King *You* thereby lights the beacon fires on Mount *Li* to call for the feudal lords. When the armies arrive in haste and discover that the alarm is false, *Baosi* laughs uproariously. However, when King *You*'s kingdom subsequently comes under a true attack by the barbarians, the

feudal lords fail to come to his aid, resulting not only in King *You*'s death at the foothills of Mount *Li*, but also in *Baosi*'s demise when a barbarian strangles her.[26]

Da Ji 妲己 (12th cent. B.C.) is the beautiful concubine who is captured by *Zhou Xin*, the last ruler of the *Shang* 商 dynasty, during his expedition. Not only does she cause the ruler to destroy his house, she is also described as the force behind the fall of the *Shang* dynasty.[27]

Zhang Lihua 張麗華 [28] and Lady *Kong* 孔 of the Six Dynasties period 六朝 (222-589) are two consorts of the last emperor, *Chen Shubao* 陳叔寶 (r. 553-604 A.D.). Their actions cause the ruler to neglect his affairs of state and finally to relinquish his government, paving the way for the *Sui* 隋 dynasty's (581-618) general *Han Qinhu* 韓擒虎 to conquer the kingdom. Following the *Sui* dynasty's conquest of *Chen Shubao*'s empire, the monarch, accompanied by his two consorts, is tossed into a well.[29]

Xiao 蕭, the consort of Emperor *Yang* 煬帝 (r. 605-618) of the *Sui* 隋 dynasty, is thoroughly delighted when Emperor *Yang* builds the Grand Canal, at the price of his subjects' suffering. However, this occurrence initiates a series of events eventually leading to the emperor's decapitation at the *Wugong* Terrace 公臺.[30]

Finally, the most infamous of consorts, *Yang Guifei* 楊貴妃 [31] of Emperor *Minghuang* 明皇 (r. 712-756) of the *Tang* 唐 dynasty, leads the *Yang* family to

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[26] See the section on "*Pao Ssu* 褒姒" in Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese Biographical Dictionary 古今姓氏族譜 (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1898) 619-20.

[27] See the section on "*Da Ji* 妲己" in Giles 704-5.

[28] *Zhang Lihua* 張麗華 (or *Zhang Guifei* 張貴妃) (6th cent. A.D.) who called herself *Zhang Change* 張常娥, after the Goddess of the Moon. She was the favorite concubine of *Chen Shubao* 陳叔寶, last Emperor of the *Chen* 陳 dynasty.

[29] The section on "*Ch'en Shu-pao* 陳叔寶" in Giles 101.

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[31] *Yang Guifei* 楊貴妃 died 756 A.D. Her personal name is *Yang Yuhuan* 楊玉環. Originally she is the concubine to Prince *Shou* 壽, the eighteenth son of his father Emperor *Ming Huang* 明皇. Three years later, she is passed into the harem of the father. She receives the title of *Tai Zhen* 太眞, and is raised to the rank of "*Guifei* 貴妃".

ruin during the *An Lushan*'s 安祿山 rebellion. The deposed emperor orders the eunuch *Gao Lishih* 高力士 to strangle *Yang* to death.[32]

iii. *Femmes Fatales* in *Sanyan Erpai*

In accordance with their moral endowments, three types of *femmes fatales* are introduced in *Sanyan Erpai*: the dispositional, the situational and the deviational. The "dispositional" *femme fatale* refers to those women who "attract men by an aura of charm." The second form of the *femme fatale*, the "situational," refers to those who "lure men into dangerous or compromising situations." The third category, the "deviational" type, includes women who depart from what is considered as typical behavior for women in the first two categories. That is, rather than only utilizing their aura of charm to lure men into dangerous or compromising situations, these insatiable women also succumb to their own carnal and licentious desires. However, whether their fate is that of death or banishment, their degree of suffering will always be greater than that of their victims.

III. THE CONCEPT OF RETRIBUTION

The term "retribution" can be interpreted by dividing it into two kinds of requitals, *bao* 報 and *baoying* 報應, in which *bao* has a positive and *baoying* has a negative connotation, respectively. Despite differences in its interpretation, retribution has had a long tradition in Chinese thought. Two schools of thought exist – Confucianism and Buddhism -- each with its own interpretation of how retribution should function. However, when it departs from human control, both schools place their faith in the same determinant of justice – *Tian* 天 (Heaven) --

[32] See the sections on "*Yang Kuei-fei* 楊貴妃" in Giles 908-9.

for consolation. A brief discussion of each school's interpretation of "*baoying*" is essential at this point.

Confucius' (551-479 B.C.) view of retribution begins with his adoption of the "*Tianming*" 天命 (Decree of Heaven or Mandate of Heaven), a doctrine originated by the Duke of *Chou*: "Heaven … [is] a personified supreme force, dictating the events of nature and man, wielding the power of reward and punishment."[33] When attributing "*Tianming*" as the main force behind the downfall of *Shang* (1751-1112 B.C) and the sucession of *Zhou* (1111-249 B.C.) in 1111 B.C., the founder of the *Zhou* dynasty justified his right to rule by developing the doctrine of "*Tianming*." According to this self-created law, "man's destiny -- both mortal and immortal -- depended, not upon the existence of a soul before birth or after death nor upon the whim of a spiritual force, but upon his own good words and good deeds."[34] As explained by *Zhou*, the members of the *Shang* dynasty lost their virtue, causing their mandate to be passed to their virtuous successor. According to this theory, the "Decree of Heaven" is a moral imperative.[35] A further example of this concept is illustrated in *Shi Jing*, the third stanza of Song #235:

> The charge is not easy to keep;
> May it not end in your persons.
> Display and make bright your good fame
> And consider what Heaven did to *Yin*.
> The doings of high Heaven
> Have no sound, no smell.
> Make King *Wen* your pattern
> And all the states will trust in you.[36]

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[33] C. K. Yang, "The Functional Relationship Between Confucian Thought and Chinese Religion," Chinese Thought and Institutions, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957) 273.
[34] Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1963) 3.
[35] Lau xxv.
[36] Watson 224.

Thus, the definition of the "Mandate of Heaven" clearly implies that one's destiny depends upon one's good deeds, that is, there exists a reciprocation of action, *yinguo baoying* 因果報應, which, in its strictest sense, means that every *yin* 因 (seed, cause), has a *guo* 果 (fruit, effect). Metaphorically, the "Mandate of Heaven" is the causal link between seed and fruit. This cause and effect relationship implies that the nature of a response can be predicted solely by the nature of a particular action.

Karl S. Y. Kao's explanation provides a clear understanding of this concept: "*Baoying* on the other hand involves mainly only one party functioning both as the agent and the patient: the original action by the agent being the 'cause' of an 'effect' that befalls, overtakes, the same person, thereby turning him/her into a patient who suffers a corresponding consequence ... the beneficiary (or substitute) in the *baoying* situation is also the benefactor."[37] Thus, according to Kao, a retribution has no "reaction," but, rather, only a simple "reflexivity." Nevertheless, both forms of causation are not necessarily limited to retaliation. That is, in some circumstances, they can also bring recompensation.

Confucius believed that retribution, whether as either retaliation or recompensation, must occurr during one's own lifetime. This belief is best illustrated in Book XI.12 of *Lunyu* 論語 (The Analects) when the disciple *Jilu* 季路 asks how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served:

> *Chi-lu* asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served. The Master said, 'You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?'
>
> 季路問事鬼神。子曰："未能事人，焉能事鬼？"
> 曰："敢問死。"曰："未知生，焉知死？"

[37] Kao, CLEAR 130.

'May I ask about death?'
'You do not understand even life. How can you understand death?'[38]

This excerpt shows that Confucius was reluctant to accept the existence of "life after death." His refusal to propose an answer to either question implies that he was concerned with life in its "substance" and "temporality."

Buddhism as a way to salvation and a way of life [39] was introduced into China in the first half of the first century A.D. For the Buddhists, the concept of "karmic retribution" replaces that of traditional "retribution"; this concept is elaborated upon in the *Sanbao Lun* 三報論 founded by Huiyuan 慧遠(334-416)(*Xianbao* 現報, *shengbao* 生報, and *houbao* 後報) in *Hongming Ji* 弘明集 by Sengyou 僧祐. This Buddhist theory identifies three categories of "karmic retribution." First, in this life, good deeds can be rewarded and bad deeds punished during the same incarnation in which they are committed. Second, deeds can be rewarded or punished in the next life. Finally, they can also be rewarded or punished in one of the following lives.[40] All of the Three Responses are carried out through "*karma* and transmigration of souls," or the so-called "reincarnation." Retribution may occur not only in one's "present" life, but it can also take place through a chain of lives; thus, the "transmigration of souls" can cover all living beings. This chain of retribution is called the *Samsara*, or the Wheel of Birth and Death,[41] suggesting that one can possibly receive one's retribution during the next life.

In response to any doubt resulting from the apparent absence of rewards and punishments, Huiyuan explains that the absence of the just reward or punishment

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[38] Lau 98-99.
[39] E. Zurcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972) 1.
[40] Walter Liebenthal, "The Immortality of the Soul in Chinese Thought," Monumenta Nipponica 8.1-2 (1952): 362.
[41] Fung Yu-lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy. Ed. Derk Bodde. (New York: The Free Press, 1966) 244.

is due to the delay of *Karma* and the fact that one's former deeds are still bearing fruit.[42] The notion of retribution is best summarized in the reply by the Elder *Fakong* 法空長老 to *Liucui*'s 柳翠 question on the relationship between cause and effect:

> Before is the cause, after is the effect; the initiator is the cause, the receiver is the effect. If planting a melon gets a melon, planting a bean gets a bean, planting is the cause, getting is the effect. If it is not because you plant, how can you have the harvest? Good cause gets good effect, bad cause gets bad effect. Therefore it says, [if you] want to know the cause in the previous life, the receiver in the present life can tell; [if you] want to know the cause in the next life, the initiator in the present life can tell.
>
> 前爲因，後爲果；作者爲因，受者爲果。假如種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆，種是因，得是果。不因種下，怎能收成？好因得好果，惡因得惡果。所以說：要知前世因，今生受者是；要知後世因，今生作者是。[43]

Linking the Buddhist concept of retribution to the concept of *bao* 報, as explained by both Karl S. Y. Kao and Lien-sheng Yang, reveals a similar reference to the "transmigration of souls." In the five aspects (or factors) of the action (and reaction) -- the intention, the mode, the manner, the agency, and the scope -- Kao points out that in the reciprocation in a *bao* situation, the scope can be extended to a blood-relative: "Benefit and malice done to a person often is seen to extend to the kinsmen of the family, either as the participant's substitute or as the extension of his person."[44] Yang's first category, familism, of the concept of *bao* is similar. Yang states that because of "familism," the "principle of response or return [working] on the basis of the family system. Rewards and punishments, curses and

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[42] Liebenthal 363.
[43] Feng Menglong, comp., "*Yueming heshang du Liucui*" 月明和尚度柳翠, *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 329-30.
[44] Kao, Chinese Literature 123.

blessings, are all transferable within a family."[45]

The notion of *ming* 命 (Decree, mandate, destiny, or fate), as mentioned above, plays an important role in the determination of "*baoying*" in Confucianism. As early as the Eastern (Later) *Han* 後漢 dynasty (25-220 A.D.), Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 A.D.) mentioned the determination of a person's fate in the "*Shouming* 壽命," in his *Baihu Tong Delun* 白虎通德論.[46] Ban classifies this concept as three kinds of *Ming* 命: "*Shouming* 壽命" (one's allotted span), "*zaoming* 遭命" (one's meeting with destiny), and "*suiming* 隨命" (one's accord with one's deeds in life). In his explanation of "*zaoming* 遭命," Ban writes of "*zaoming yi yu bao* 遭命以遇暴" (accepting one's meeting with destiny in the case of a cruel encounter) and implies that one should "*tingtian youming* 聽天由命"(Listen to Heaven and act in accordance with destiny). In Analects XIV, 36, Confucius refers to *Ming* 命:

"It is Destiny if the Way prevails; it is equally Destiny if the Way falls into disuse." "道之將行也與，命也；道之將廢也與，命也。"[47]

Thus, Confucius appears to believe the issue should be left to destiny. As Fung Yu-lan explains, "The best thing for us to do is simply to try to carry out what we know we ought to carry out, without caring whether in the process we succeed or fail."[48]

Although that Buddhism stresses a different notion of "*ming*" 命 (decree), there exists a common belief that this metaphysical level "*tian*" 天 (Heaven) would play its role to redress any human injustice: "Beyond man there was a supreme

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[45] Lien-shang Yang, "The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China." Chinese Thought and Institutions. Ed. John K. Fairbank. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1957) 302.
[46] Ban Gu 班固, *Baihu Tong Delun* 白虎通德論 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990) 61-2.
[47] Lau 142-3.
[48] Fung 45.

determinant: fate, as ordained by Heaven."[49] This concept is equivalent to the colloquial expression of the "third party" in that "Someone is always watching your back." This third eye ensures that every individual receives a just retribution when one can no longer be administered by humans. Thus, didactic tales often include this couplet, "The net of Heaven is cast wide./ Though the mesh is not fine, yet nothing ever slips through,"[50] implying *bushi bubao, shihou weidao* 不是不報，時候未到(Not that there is no retribution, it is just that the time has not yet arrived). Alternatively, it is *shan'e daotou zhongyou bao, zhizheng laizao yu laichi* 善惡到頭終有報，只爭來早與來遲。[51] [The good and evil will have retribution toward the end, which depend on either coming sooner or later.]

The next chapter analyses three types of the *femme fatale*, with examples taken from a selection of didactic stories in the *Sanyan Erpai*. Each of their retributions illustrates the same concept: "[p]arents, husbands and male kin all fail to control the passions of the *femme fatale*. Only the forces of broader social control, represented by the metaphor of 'the net of Heaven,' succeed in halting the chain of catastrophic events which result when a woman follows her desires."[52] Chapter Three contains the synopses of the fifteen stories discussed in Chapter Two and concludes with some final remarks.

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[49] Yang 274.
[50] Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963) 135.
[51] Ling Mengchu 凌濛初, *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1981) 398.
[52] McLaren 9.

Chapter Two

The Three Types of *Femmes Fatales* in the *Sanyan Erpai*

Contrary to the general conceptualization of the *femme fatale* as a single icon, the *femmes fatales* portrayed in *Sanyan Erpai* can be classified into three types: the dispositional, the situational, and the deviational. The classification is significant because it reflects the degree of retribution (*bao* 報 or *baoying* 報應) the character receives; that is, her retribution will correspond to the degree of her deviousness.

I. The Dispositional Type: *Femmes fatales* who use "an aura of charm" to attract men

The dispositional *femmes fatales* consistently possess unique beauty and temperament, and their charisma attracts the male characters. The women's role can be either submissive or aggressive and will bring a corresponding retribution (*bao* 報 or *baoying* 報應) upon themselves and the men they attract. However, compared to the deviational type of *femme fatale*, the dispositional type is not a "shrew" (*pofu* 潑婦).[1]

The dispositional type includes beautiful courtesans in the outer sphere and wives and maidens in the inner sphere who are passive at the beginning of a courtship, representing the stereotype of traditional Chinese women. While some of them eventually become active, they reverse roles mainly to maintain true love and security with their pursuers. The morality of the *femmes fatales* who "attract men by an aura of charm" is diametrically opposed to that of the latter two types:

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[1] A "shrew" is a term used by Keith McMahon when referring to the extreme female character type: an "overflowing, male-enervating woman." She metaphorically "scatters" (*po*) her polluting fluids on the man, who is fragile unless he builds his defenses and masters her. See his Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction (Durham: Duke UP, 1995) 1.

that is, the dispositional *femmes fatales* regain their conscience during and after their carnal pleasures. The dispositional type of *femme fatale* is illustrated by the characterization of four coutesans, four wives and a maiden in nine stories from the *Sanyan Erpai*.

The four courtesans are *Yutangchun* 玉堂春 (*Yutangchun luonan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫, *Yutangchun* Meets with her Husband in Distress);[2] *Zhao Chuner* 趙春兒 (*Zhao Chuner zhongwang Chao jiazhuang* 趙春兒重旺曹家莊, *Zhao Chuner* Restores the House of *Cao*);[3] *Du Shiniang* 杜十娘 (*Du Shiniang nuchen baibao xiang* 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱,[4] *Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger);[5] and *Wang Meiniang* 王美娘 (*Maiyoulang duzhan Huakui* 賣油郎獨占花魁, The Oil Peddler Courts the Courtesan).[6]

The four wives are *Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒 (*Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫,[7] The Pearl Shirt Reencountered);[8] *Wu Niangzi* 巫娘子 (*Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niwen mihua jizhongji Jia Xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨, Old Nun *Zhao* Bewilders the Flower with Wine After Wine, *Jia* the Graduate Revenges with Tactic Within

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[2] Feng Menglong, comp., "*Yu Tangchun lolan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 271-301.
[3] Feng, "*Zhao Chuner zhongwang Chao jiazhuan* 趙春兒重旺曹家莊," 377-87.
[4] In his article "The Making of The Pearl-Shirt and The Courtesan's Jewel Box," Patrick Hanan shows that the story is actually based on a Classical tale entitled *Fuqing nongzhuan* 負情儂傳, The Faithless Lover, written by Song Maocheng 宋懋澄, collected in his *Jiuyue ji* 九籥集, *juan* 5. Later the story is included in the late-Ming *Qingshi leilue* 情史類略, under the title *Du Shihniang* 杜十娘. Another version can also be found in *Wenyuan zhaju* 文苑楂橘. See Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 33 (1973): 125-8.
[5] Feng, "*Du Shiniang nuchen baibao xiang* 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 (*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger)," 387-400. For English translation, see Richard M. W. Ho, trans., "*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, Inc., 1986) 146-60.
[6] Feng, "*Maiyoulang duzhan Huakui* 賣油郎獨占花魁 (The Oil Peddler Courts the Courtesan)," *Xingshi Hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Lasting Words to Awaken the World) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1983) 24-54. For English translation, see Lorraine S. Y. Lieu and the editors, trans., "The Oil Peddler Courts the Courtesan," Ma and Lau 177-208.
[7] Hanan HJAS 125-7.
[8] Feng Menglong, comp., "*Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫 (The Pearl Shirt Reencountered)," *Yushi Mingyan* 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 1-29. For English translation, see Jeanne Kelly, trans., "The Pearl Shirt Reencountered," Ma and Lau 264-92.

Tactic);[9] *Zheng Ruizhu* 鄭蕊珠 (*Xu Chajiu chengnao jie xinren Zheng Ruizhu mingyuan wan jiu'an* 徐茶酒乘鬧劫新人　鄭蕊珠鳴冤完舊案, *Xu* The Steward Takes Advantage of the Bustle and Kidnaps the Bride, *Zheng Ruizhu* Cries out for Redress and Completes the Old Case);[10] and *Chen Shi* 陳氏 (*Cheng Zhaofeng danyu wutoufu Wang Tongpan shuangxue buming yuan* 程朝奉單遇無頭婦 王通判雙雪不明冤, Wealthy *Cheng* Alone Encounters a Headless Woman, sub-Prefect *Wang* Twice cannot Clear the Unclear Charge).[11] The maiden is *Wang Jiaoluan* 王嬌鸞 (*Wang Jiaoluan bainian changhen* 王嬌鸞百年長恨, The Hundred-Year Hatred of *Wang Jiaoluan*).[12]

Instead of thoroughly analysing each dispositional *femme fatale*, this section will selectively discuss a number of them, based upon the structure of the stories, the importance of the *femmes fatales*' roles, and the degree of didacticism in the finale. The analysis of the above three sub-groups of the dispositional *femme fatale* will discuss each sub-group's charm, schemes, and retribution. The courtesans are discussed first.

i. Courtesans

In the public eye, courtesanship is considered to be an outcast occupation[13] solely concerned with the exchange of sex for money. The customer lavishly spends on a desired service, which the courtesan provides with her body. An

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[9] Ling Mengchu, "*Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niwen mihua jizhongji Jia xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨," *Chuke Paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 73-91.

[10] Ling, "*Xu chajiu chengnao jie xinren Zheng Ruizhu mingyuan wan jiu'an* 徐茶酒乘鬧劫新人　鄭蕊珠鳴冤完舊案," *Erke Paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1981) 357-68.

[11] Ling, "*Cheng Zhaofeng danyu wutoufu Wang tongpan shuangxue buming yuan* 程朝奉單遇無頭婦 王通判雙雪不明冤," 392-402.

[12] Feng, "*Wang Jiaoluan bainian changhen* 王嬌鸞百年長恨," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 412-26.

[13] Four kinds of occupation are considered as outcast in ancient China: *Chang* 娼 (prostitute), *You* 優 (actor and actress), *Li* 隸 (lictor) and *Zu* 卒 (soldier).

alternate, colloquial term for this type of entertainer, *huoyao nu* 貨腰女, literally means "a girl who uses her waist as goods." Such a woman is seen as having no morality, let alone any kind of virtue. As a timeless proverb states, "There is no true love in a pleasure place" (*huanchang wu zhenai* 歡場無眞愛). Neither the customer nor the provider should bring in any *qing* 情 (affections or feelings), not to mention *ai* 愛 (love), into the business. Any trace of *qing* or *ai* , particularly on the part of a courtesan, is considered as an attempt to trap the customer and is a feeling that is not *zhen* 眞 (true). Customers who feel an attraction exhibit a mutual feeling only because "The wine does not make people drunk, people [only] make themselves drunk; the beauty does not bewilder people, people [only] bewilder themselves" 酒不醉人人自醉，色不迷人人自迷。[14]

Nevertheless, in contrast to the present profession of prostitution, courtesans in traditional China were more than mere "physical" commodities. Indeed, they had a remarkable degree of "talent." From their proficiency in singing, to their expertise in the composition of poems, these beautiful and "talented" companions were universally welcomed by scholars who shared similar interests. In many cases, their relationships with their patrons were based not only upon sexual intimacy, but also involved an exchange of poetry and painting. In the *Ming* 明 dynasty, however, the doors of the blue buildings' (*qinglou* 青樓) were no longer opened exclusively for the gentry. With its flourishing economy, the merchant class, which used to belong to the bottom of the social hierarchy (officer, farmer, laborer, merchant 士，農，工，商), began to gain more buying power. This newly attained skyrocketing power enabled the merchants to satisfy themselves materialistically, allowing them to enter a world where they were not previously welcome: the world of the gentry. From buying positions as officials to visiting renowned courtesans, these merchants used money to compensate for their sense of inferiority and to achieve their goal of reaching the top of the social

[14] Feng, "*Yu Tangchun luonan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫." *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 274.

ladder. Subsequently, a sudden increased demand existed for well-rounded (*sheng, se, yi juquan* 聲，色，藝俱全) courtesans, particularly during that period.

Following their sudden increase in income, not all the courtesans practised their golden rule of "sending the old away and welcoming the new" (*songjiu yingxin* 送舊迎新). As social outcasts during the *Ming* period, these courtesans, who were famous for their poetic compositions and musicianship, also maintained high moral standards. The morality of these particular courtesans made them much more than simple "debauchers" and revealed the inaccuracy of a popular seventeenth-century dictim, "*Nuzi wucai bianshi de*" 女子無才便是德 (A woman without talent indeed is virtuous). However, these highly moral women represented only a minority of the total number of courtesans.

Yutangchun 玉堂春, *Zhao Chuner* 趙春兒, and *Du Shiniang* 杜十娘 are three distinct examples of courtesans possessing both outer beauty and inner virtue. Also wealthy, none of these three distinguished courtesans is narcissistic. Quite the reverse, their actions are contrary to their period's norms and their profession's expectations. As well as not using their natural beauty to manipulate their lovers, or not following the golden rule of their profession, *Yutangchun*, *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* frequently side with their lovers, encouraging and helping them to rebuild their lives even in the face of nagging mothers and the possiblility of severe punishment. Using their accumulated savings, each of these beauties hopes that with her help, her lover can either restore relations with his family or resume his studies in order to rejoin and contribute to society. In the meantime, these women also free themselves from bondage (*congliang* 從良) so that they can marry their lovers. All three female characters are endowed "with a power of self-determination and self-invention that exceeds not only normal female roles but male ones as well."[15] Although these courtesans are not "chaste"

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[15] Keith McMahon, "The Classic 'Beauty-Scholar' Romance and the Superiority of the Talented Woman," Body, Subject & Power in China, ed. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1994) 228.

in the traditional sense, the mutual love between them and their lovers classifies each of them as a "beauty-scholar" (*jiaren caizi* 佳人才子).[16]

Bidding farewell to their comfortable bedchambers, *Yutangchun*, *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* leave their luxurious, gay lives and, without guarantees, step out into the unknown. With their devoted and faithful love for their pursuers, they believe that their new lives with their true loves will only be better than their present lives, but after "placing all hope in her chosen lover, [the courtesan] is sooner or later brought to face social and economic reality."[17] Do their new lives in the outside bring them a newly found utopia or simply an illusion of happiness? This question cannot be answered by considering only their final retributions. The nature of their lovers, hardships, and inner struggles should all be considered in order to determine how satisfactory their new lives are. Examining these factors helps one to analyze the dispositions of these three *femmes fatales* and to decide whether they receive fair retributions. I begin my study with the inexperienced *Yutangchun* before dealing with the experienced *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang*.

a) *YUTANGCHUN* 玉堂春

Unlike the experienced *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang*, who have been in their profession for a long time and have accumulated savings, which give them the ability to buy themselves out of bondage, the inexperienced *Yutangchun* lacks this asset. Lacking experience in life and love, she obeys her procuress, *Yi Chengjin* 一秤金. When *Yutangchun* meets her lover-client, *Wang Jinglong*

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[16] "The Classic 'Beauty-Scholar' Romance and the Superiority of the Talented Woman," Keith McMahon says that according to Christina Shu-hwa Yao's Ph.D. dissertation on "*Cai-zi Jia-ren*: Love drama during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods," *caizi* and *jiaren* are present in three types of love stories: love between a gifted man and a courtesan, love between man and ghost or spirit, and premarital affairs between young men and women from upper-class families. See note 5 in Keith McMahon, Body, Subject & Power in China 247, and Christina Shu-hwa Yao, *Cai-zi Jia-ren*: Love drama during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods, diss., Stanford U, 1987.

[17] C. T. Hsia, "Society and Self in the Chinese Short Story," The Classical Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1968) 313.

王景隆, her love at first sight for him completely overwhelms her understanding that their relationship should be based only on money and sex. In contrast to *Zhao Chuner*, who asks her spendthrift lover, *Cao Kecheng* 曹可成, to buy her out of bondage, the pure and candid *Yutangchun* never makes this request. Instead, her only concern is to be with her lover and she hopes for the best for him.

Coming from a good family (she is sold by her famous father due to famine), *Yutangchun* still retains her conscientiousness. In spite of her courtesanship, several of her actions that are contrary to her profession's norms plant the seeds for her subsequent rewards. After thoughtfully warning the immature *Jinglong* about her heartless procuress, *Yutangchun* uses a clever scheme and her gifts of money to help him return home. Her kind advice to him to concentrate on his studies and not to pay more visits to the "flower street and willow alley" (*huajie liuhang* 花街柳行) and her prayers for his success in his examinations are aimed toward eventually transforming *Jinglong*'s personality. Later, her good nature brings her multiple rewards (*haobao* 好報). *Yutangchun*'s first retribution is her release from being wrongfully accused of murder, when ironically, her lover, *Wang Jinglong*, rescues her from a potential death penalty. Her second retribution, which relates to her release from her murder charge, is her becoming her lover's concubine. Her third retribution occurs when *Wang Jinglong*'s wife, *Liu* 劉 *Shi*, suggests eliminating the ranks of "wife" (*qi* 妻) and "concubine" (*qie* 妾). Without these ranks in *Jinglong*'s family, *Yutangchun* gains respect from *Liu Shi*, who makes *Yutangchun* feel even more comfortable by addressing her as "sister." Finally, her last retribution is being blessed with sons, a very important blessing, especially for the family of an official. In addition to prolonging *Jinglong*'s patrilineal line, her sons also protect her in the family and provide security in her old age. Thus, because of her faithfulness and conscientiousness, *Yutangchun* escapes from her meager life into a blessed family.

Yutangchun deserves to receive her multiple good retributions, particularly

because she is largely responsible for the gradual changes in *Wang Jinglong*. As the youngest son of a wealthy family, the seventeen-year-old *Jinglong* is immature and insecure. In order to cover up his inferiority, the young scholar develops his superiority complex and repeatedly brags about his father's importance and his family's wealth. *Jinglong*'s lavish spending of his father's money, to seek the favor of *Yutangchun* and to show off to her procuress, finally results in his being discarded by the procuress once he is broke. Contrasting with his prior wealth, his dire poverty (he becomes a beggar after he loses his night watchman's job) forces him to face his inferiority. Despite his later ambition to study and become a successful official, only with *Yutangchun*'s help does *Jinglong* rebuild his bond with his father and achieve his fame. Consequently, *Jinglong*'s faithfulness to his rescuer (he ceases visiting brothels and returns two years later to find her), his subsequent investigation into her murder charge, and his arrangement for her livelihood in Beijing after she is released, finally grant the once immature and arrogant lad a reunion with *Yutangchun* with his father's approval and his wife's acceptance.

Because *Yutangchun* helps her lover to put his life in order so that his father will accept him and he can have a successful career, she is rewarded by being freed from prostitution and then given a comfortable life. Compared to *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang*, *Yutangchun* does not experience much hardship before reaching her desired destination. With her multiple good retributions, *Yutangchun* succeeds in finding her utopia after choosing to leave her courtesanship.

In contrast to *Yutangchun*, *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* have been working in their profession for a long time (the latter has been a courtesan for seven years, ever since she was thirteen years old). Because they receive only wealthy merchants and nobility, *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* have accumulated enormous savings and become financially independent, but although they could buy themselves out of bondage, they choose to remain in their profession. The

shared motive behind their decision is easy to comprehend. Unlike maidens who reside passively in their inner chambers and wait for their fates to be determined by their fathers and matchmakers, courtesans are required to step out of their inner chambers in order to acquire customers. In the process, these women meet men from different social classes. Since both *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* rise up to the courtesan (*mingji* 名妓) level, they can receive upper-class patrons. These encounters with a wide variety of men allow *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang* to choose the man with whom they would like to live with.

Each of these experienced and wealthy women meets the man of her dreams: *Cao Kecheng* and *Li Jia* 李甲, respectively. These men's character traits determine the kind of retributions that the women eventually receive.

b) *ZHAO CHUNER* 趙春兒

After years of *pirou shengya* 皮肉生涯(prostitution), *Zhao Chuner* longs to live a normal life by serving one man. When she meets her lover, *Cao Kecheng*, she wastes no time in asking him to purchase her freedom from bondage. In contrast to *Yutangchun*, *Chuner* leaves her profession with considerable savings. Despite the hardships caused by the wastrel *Kecheng*, *Chuner* never abandons him. Instead, this courtesan seriously carries out her duties as a virtuous wife.

With both her patience and understanding, *Chuner* is like a mother figure to her husband: she always gives advice, but never discourages him. When *Kecheng* is in dire straits after his father's death and cannot afford to buy daily necessities or sacrifices for his father's three-year mourning period, *Chuner* continues to provide him with money unconditionally even though she knows the majority of his decisions will end in failure. Like a mother with an infant, *Chuner* believes that *Kecheng* can learn to stand on his own only from his repeated fallings. After she spends all her savings, *Chuner* knows that her husband is still learning to be

independent. Accordingly, this woman, who once lived a comfortable life, takes up weaving for the next fifteen years. She never criticizes her wastrel husband even though she must support him during all the time.

Kecheng's desire to pursue his studies is the turning point in his own life and also enables the diligent and frugal *Chuner* to receive her reward. Similar to how *Du Shiniang* tests the sincerity of her lover, *Li Jia* (see Chapter 3, story 3), *Chuner* asks *Kecheng* to prepare the documents for his application to become an official while she goes to borrow one hundred and eighty *taels* from her sisters. After he borrows money from his students' parents and returns home, *Chuner* then asks *Kecheng* to dig up the ground under her weaving table. Only then does *Kecheng* realize that the hidden gauze hat and money-filled vats are *Chuner*'s hidden savings from her previous prostitution and her fifteen years of daily preparation for *Kecheng*'s repentance.

Kecheng's eventual appointment as an official and the re-acquisition of the *Caos*' property result from *Chuner*'s perseverance. Her outstanding virtues eventually allow the couple to begin to live a prosperous new life, enabling *Zhao Chuner* to climb the social ladder and become a wealthy official's wife.

While *Yutangchun* receives multiple rewards from helping her lover to attain his fame, *Zhao Chuner*'s efforts in changing her husband result in a single retribution. The fifteen-years transformation of *Cao Kecheng*, who begins as a thirty-year-old wastrel who pawns his family's properties and steals his father's ingots, and ends as a successful student and official, completely depends on *Chuner*'s patience during her long hardships. The good retributions received by both *Yutangchun* and *Zhao Chuner* indicate that they made the right choice when they abandoned their lives as courtesans in order to be with their lovers.

c) *DU SHINIANG* 杜十娘

Of the three courtesans, *Du Shiniang* is the wealthiest and the most experienced in her profession. As we read of how she helps her lover, *Li Jia*, to improve his life, we expect that she will be rewarded, but our expectations are not fulfilled. In the end, her lover betrays her, and she commits suicide because of her shattered dreams.

Illustrating the old saying *youyan wuzhu* 有眼無珠 [eyes without sight], *Du Shiniang* fails to perceive her lover's unchangeable meek nature. Like the motherly *Zhao Chuner*, *Du Shiniang* also uses her savings little by little to help her lover through hardships. But unlike *Zhao Chuner*, who also allows her once wastrel husband to taste the bitterness of life so that he can learn to treasure his gains and appreciate her unconditional love, *Du Shiniang* simply gives money to *Li Jia* whenever he needs it, and thus, she completely spoils him. The only time she lets him experience poverty occurs when she makes him responsible for raising three hundreds *taels* in ten days for her ransom, but, in the end, *Du Shiniang* pays the first half of the sum when *Li Jia* returns empty-handed after six days.

Three other examples further illustrate her spoiling of *Li Jia*. The first example occurs before *Du Shiniang* hands over the three hundred *taels* of ransom to her procuress on the tenth day. Knowing her poor lover does not have any money for their upcoming traveling expenses, *Du Shiniang* decides to protect his dignity by lying that she has already borrowed twenty *taels* of white silver from her sisters the day before. The second example occurs when *Du Shiniang* relieves *Li Jia*'s anxiety about how his furious father will react when *Li Jia* returns home. With her suggestion that she will sojourn around *Suzhou* 蘇州 and *Hangzhou* 杭州 while *Li Jia* returns home to ask for his father's forgiveness, *Du Shiniang* puts her lover's mind at ease. The third example occurs when *Du*'s sisters bring along a jewel box (actually, it belongs to *Du*) to bid her and *Li Jia* farewell. Pretending the jewel box is a gift from her sisters, *Du Shiniang* takes out money from it from time to time to pay for their traveling expenses.

Unfortunately, *Du Shiniang*'s love and generosity are not rewarded with *Li Jia*'s appreciation after the lovers overcome their hardships together. Instead, this famous courtesan receives only disappointment and betrayal in return for her love and kindness. Like *Li Jia*, *Cao Kecheng* is also a meek wastrel, but the latter learns from his hardships how to appreciate *Zhao Chuner*'s love and constant support. In contrast, *Li Jia* continues to live his parasitic life. With his effeminate nature, not only is he incapable of supporting *Du Shiniang*, he is even unable to plan for himself and cries whenever he encounters difficulties. *Li Jia* reveals his obvious incapability during his fund-raising for *Du Shiniang*'s ransom. Even when *Du Shiniang* pays out half of the sum after his six days of failure, he is still unable to raise the other half; only with the help from his friend *Liu Yuchun* 柳遇春 can *Li* complete his mission. In addition, *Li Jia* is also endowed with a superiority complex similar to that of *Wang Jinglong* (the lover of *Yutangchun*) and brags to cover up his inferiority. During his meeting with the wealthy salt merchant's son *Sun Fu* 孫富, *Li Jia* has no possessions apart from those of *Du Shiniang*. Nevertheless, in order to demostrate his capability, he reveals his expertise in visiting the blue building (*qinglou* 青樓) and brags about his ability to have the renowned courtesan *Du Shiniang* of *Beijing* at his side. But when the cunning *Sun Fu* exploits *Li Jia*'s fear and hopes (he fears his father and his hope to have money to cover up his lavish spending), *Li Jia* selfishly accepts *Sun*'s offer and betrays *Du Shiniang*'s devotion and faith.

At this point, the reader might doubt the sincerity of *Li Jia*'s love for *Du Shiniang*. After two years of togetherness, how can *Li Jia* decide to betray *Du Shiniang* by selling her to *Sun Fu* after just one meeting? In fact, *Li Jia* probably never truly loved *Du Shiniang*, and his meek nature and ambivalent feelings toward the courtesan make his heartless decision to betray her relatively easy for him. However, when faced with the need to choose between staying with *Du Shiniang* and escaping from his fear of his father, *Li Jia* also has an internal

struggle; otherwise, he would submit to *Sun Fu*'s suggestion on the spot instead of later, in tears, discussing this matter with *Du Shiniang*. As well, *Du Shiniang* is also partly responsible for *Li Jia*'s abandonment of her. If she did not spoil her lover and instead allowed him to experience some hardships like those of *Cao Kecheng*, maybe *Li Jia* would have learned how to treasure and appreciate her.

Optimistically leaving her old life behind, *Du Shiniang* is, in fact, walking toward the worst fate: her ruthless lover's unforeseeable betrayal of her. She is still expendable in the eyes of her lover. Regardless of her wealth, *Du Shiniang* feels completely hopeless about her life. Although she can choose to leave both *Li Jia* and *Sun Fu* and live independently, *Du Shiniang*'s wounded pride causes her to choose to end her life by drowning herself in the river. Life is not disappointing to *Du Shiniang*, but, rather, her fate is. In spite of how well she plans her life with her lover, in the end she still becomes nothing more than "physical goods" in the eyes of her lover and *Sun Fu*: the same kind of "plaything" of men that she always used to be. *Du Shiniang*'s request to *Li Jia* to take out her jewelry from her jewel box so that she can throw her jewelry into the river illustrates that money alone cannot buy love. Even with *Li Jia*'s subsequent insanity and *Sun Fu*'s death, both illustrating "revenge by Heaven" (*tianbao* 天報) on behalf of *Du Shiniang*, the death of the faithful renowned courtesan is still a pity.

Hence, by becoming economically independent, the three quintessential courtesans, *Yutangchun*, *Zhao Chuner* and *Du Shiniang*, can dream of finding a lover whom they can depend upon and then leaving their degraded occupation. Disappointingly, once they step out of their warm bedchambers into the harsh world, their dream lovers are revealed as meek, indecisive and immature, an inversion of the stereotypical male. The courtesans, on the other hand, act out stereotypical female qualities while being "protective, even maternal, as [they] comfort [their lovers] in crisis after crisis."[18]

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[18] Hanan, HJAS 148.

The results of *Yutangchun*'s devoted love and plan for *Wang Jinglong* reveal that she has chosen the right person to attach her life to. Although he is meek and irresponsible in the beginning, *Yutangchun* never gives up on him during his time of hardships. Her help and planning facilitate his reconciliation with his father, which also helps her to be acquitted from false charges after *Jinglong*'s success as an official. Although her reunion with him does not automatically grant her the status of wife, *Yutangchun* still receives respect from his first wife and bears sons for her husband; more importantly, she rises from being perceived as a "social outcast" to becoming a respected woman.

Zhao Chuner is also rewarded, but in a different way. Like *Yutangchun*, *Zhao Chuner* begins with large accumulated savings. Nevertheless her lover's generous offer to her procuress is what frees her from bondage. Subsequently, her frugality and her endurance of hardships repeatedly help *Kecheng* to survive. Her subsequent fifteen years of savings from weaving, along with her previous savings from prostitution, finally help her husband to fulfill his dream of becoming an official, and, in due course, allow her to achieve the status of an official's wife.

Du Shiniang is the most unfortunate case; she does not share the fortunate fate of the other two courtesans. Among the three of them, *Du Shiniang* is the wealthiest. However, her lover, *Li Jia*, is the most heartless of the three lovers. Throughout difficult times, *Li Jia* is unable to solve any problems by himself. *Du Shiniang*'s constant emotional and financial support, while preserving *Li Jia*'s reputation and easing his burdens, does not provide her with a good retribution in the end. Instead, due to his overriding fear of returning empty-handed to his father, *Li Jia* accepts *Sun Fu*'s suggestion to sell *Du Shiniang* for one thousand *taels* of silver. *Li Jia* deserts his devoted courtesan just when the two of them are approaching the end of their dreadful ordeal. Without hope for a future with her beloved man, *Du Shiniang* ends her ephemeral life by drowning herself in the river.

Yutangchun, Zhao Chuner and *Du Shiniang*, three celebrated talented courtesans, are all unlike wives who reside in their homes with caring husbands by their sides. Instead, each of these three courtesans has to strive to find a life with a man whom she can depend on. One may say the sole purpose of their striving is to move from the cold and harsh macrocosmic world of society into the cozy and safe microcosmic world of the home. But are the wives with "an aura of charm" who actually inhabit the courtesans' dreamed utopia really safe and worry free? In the following section, an analysis of the unintended experiences of both *Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒 and *Wu Niangzi* 巫娘子 will provide an answer.

ii. Wives

A wife is expected to maintain a "wifely devotion"; that is, she must remain chaste and loyal to her husband by staying within her inner chamber as much as possible or, in other words, by isolating herself from the outer sphere. Chastity is the expected norm for a wife. Faithfulness is stressed as the crucial element of chastity and is a virtue expected of both the man and the woman. Despite the apparent suggestion of equality of duty, however, the woman bears the greater responsibility for maintaining a harmonious marriage.

Sometimes, regardless of her effort to carry out her moral responsibilities by staying modestly indoors, a wife's "aura of charm" still can attract attention from outsiders. This kind of situation commonly happens under two circumstances: either the stunning beauty of the wife is a well-known fact, or an outsider accidentally catches a glimpse of her. As Keith McMahon remarks, "Illicit relationships occur because women are accidentally or negligently allowed too much access or exposure, often through actual doorways, windows, and gaps in walls surrounding compounds."[19] With their lustful desires overwhelming any

[19] Keith McMahon, Causality and Containment in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988) Ch. 1.

consideration for a wife's reputation, sexually impetuous lechers will waste no time in hunting for their object of affection. Ding Yaokang defines three kinds of lust in men, all included in the following two stories. The first kind is the "genius's lust" (*caizi yin* 才子淫): a man with this kind of lust "is handsome and talented and cares to pursue only the most beautiful of girls." The second kind is the "prodigal's lust" (*dangzi yin* 蕩子淫): this kind of lustful man "spends a fortune on pretty women in the pleasure quarter." This kind of *yin* is actually not restricted only to the pleasure quarter. The lecher is more than willing to spend his wealth anywhere, as long as he captures his desired prey. The third type is the "sex maniac's lust" (*xiong-huang yin* 兇荒淫): a man with this kind of lust "is so shamelessly obsessed with sex that he will copulate with women of any age, looks, or class."[20]

In many stories, the uncontrollable lecher is usually assisted by one of the *Sangu liupo* 三姑六婆,[21] a bevy of strolling women,[22] who mediate between the lecher and the targeted woman. Because of their crafty schemes and patience while aiming at their target, the vulnerable lonely wife who is left behind by her husband is prone to let the cunning victimizers cross the forbidden boundaries, and adultery will begin.

With an analysis of the situations of two wives, *Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒 and *Wu Niangzi* 巫娘子, the impositions by their crafty pursuers and mediators, the responses of these beautiful wives, and finally the retributions for the victims and the victimizers will be revealed. Because of the structure of each story, the discussion of *Sanqiao'er* will be more thorough.

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[20] Yenna Wu, The Chinese Virago: a literary theme (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995) 126.

[21] *Sangu* 三姑 refers to *nigu* 尼姑 (a Buddhist nun), *daogu* 道姑 (a Taoist nun), and *guagu* 卦姑 (a divine nun). *Liupo* 六婆 refers to *yapo* 牙婆 (a female broker), *meipo* 媒婆 (a go-between), *shipo* 師婆 (an instructor), *qianpo* 虔婆 (a witch), *yaopo* 藥婆 (a medical woman), and *wenpo* 穩婆 (a midwife). See footnote 1 in Ling, "*Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niwen mihua jizhongji Jia xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨," *Chuke Paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 88.

[22] R. H. Mathews, comp., Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary 麥氏漢英大辭典 (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1979) 747.

a) *SANQIAO'ER* 三巧兒

Sanqiao'er must be placed first in any list of *femmes fatales* of the dispositional type. The charm of her story, *Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫, lies neither in its perfectly knitted coincidental plots nor in the cause of the retributions, but in the metamorphosis of *Sanqiao'er*, the transformation of her morality before and after she falls into the trap set by her pursuer, *Chen Dalang* 陳大郎, with the help of the pearl seller, Granny *Xue* 薛婆.

Before looking out her window and meeting eyes with *Chen Dalang*, *Sanqiao'er* is already desperately longing for the return of her husband, *Jiang Xingge* 蔣興哥. After four years of marriage, *Sanqiao'er* has developed the habit of constant companionship with her beloved husband. Consequently, with *Xingge*'s necessary departure for a business excursion that he has neglected for five years, *Sanqiao'er* suddenly is all alone. In addition, her husband has requested her not to invite trouble by standing at the front gate and revealing her eye-appealing beauty, so she is not only alone, she is also confined to the interior of her home.

Sanqiao'er reveals her urgent need to free herself from her cell of loneliness on New Year's Day, the day when her husband, *Xingge*, has promised to return. When her two maids, Bright Cloud (*Qingyun* 晴雲) and Warm Snow (*Nuanxue* 煖雪), urge their mistress to go to the front room to view the bustling throng on the street, *Sanqiao'er* is unable to resist. Moreover, her desire to have her husband/companion by her side on this merry festival compels her to ask a fortune-teller to foretell the approximate date of her husband's return. As the narrator comments, "[Most] people, as long as they don't cherish high hopes, will remain untroubled. Once they get their hopes stirred, then all sorts of foolish

wishes and silly ideas start coming to them, making the time drag by."[23] The fortune-teller's prediction that her husband will return soon stimulates *Sanqiao'er*'s longing, and she ignores her husband's warning. Instead, she often goes to the front of her home and from behind the curtain gazes up and down the street, hoping each time that she will see *Xingge*'s return.

Sanqiao'er's desperation does not grant her the sight of her husband; instead, her "seeing" causes her "to be seen." She stares at *Chen Dalang* after mistaking him for her husband, causing this married stranger to scheme to initiate adultery with her. *Dalang*'s notion illustrates a common psychological explanation for adultery: "A wife isn't as good as a concubine, a concubine isn't as good as a maid, a maid isn't as good as a prostitute, and a prostitute isn't as good as stealing!"[24] The possibility of challenging himself and enjoying forbidden fruit motivates *Chen Dalang* to energetically and obsessively search for a way to claim his trophy. He does not realize that his brief glimpse of *Sanqiao'er* will combine with Granny *Xue*'s subsequent help to destroy him and the beautiful married woman.

Loneliness and the need for solace turn *Sanqiao'er* into a very vulnerable target for Granny *Xue*. Knowing the mistress' desire for companionship, Madam *Xue* frequently visits this lonely wife. By using an unpaid loan from *Sanqiao'er* as an excuse, Granny *Xue* pays her almost daily visits so that they become a habit for the mistress. The lonely *Sanqiao'er* even sends her old servant to invite the granny over to keep her company. *Sanqiao'er* soon becomes used to Granny *Xue*. For instance, at their second meeting, *Sanqiao'er* asks Granny *Xue* three times to visit her again, and at their third meeting, *Sanqiao'er* even goes to the stairs to receive the old lady and treats her as an honored guest. The lonely wife reveals her extreme need for Granny *Xue*'s companionship when she invites the old woman to

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[23] Jeanne Kelly, trans., "The Pearl Shirt Reencountered," Ma and Lau 269.
[24] Keith McMahon, "Eroticism in Late *Ming*, Early *Qing* Fiction: The Beauteous Realm and the Sexual Battlefield," T'oung Pao 73 (1987): 257.

sleep in her (*Sanqiao'er*'s) bedroom for an entire summer. As a result of her loneliness and Granny *Xue*'s sexually enticing conversation, *Sanqiao'er* does not resist *Chen Dalang* on her birthday.

Sanqiao'er's adultery finishes the transformation of her morality. Her former passive self lived in the back portion of her house for a year and waited patiently for her husband's return. In contrast, the present aggressive *Sanqiao'er* needs *Dalang*'s constant sexual companionship after their first love-making and submits to him completely. Not only is she willing to continue to carry on her adultery for more than half a year, she even wants to elope with her lover to become his wife. Her concern for *Dalang* overrides her prior concern for *Xingge*, as she reveals when she presents a "pearl shirt," the heirloom of the *Jiang* family, to *Dalang* before he departs for his business trip. She tells him, "[This] shirt is an heirloom of the *Jiang* (*Chiang*) family. If you wear it in the summertime, you will feel a coolness through to your bones. ... I'm giving it to you to remember me by. When you wear this shirt, it will be as though I were pressed close to your body."[25]

Sanqiao'er's morality is like her mirror image. Before her metamorphosis, that is, prior to her committing adultery with *Chen Dalang*, *Sanqiaoer* is a chaste wife and waits patiently for her husband's return from his business excursion. The transformation phase takes place because of her husband's prolonged absence and Granny *Xue*'s "friendship." Finally, by committing adultery with *Chen Dalang*, *Sanqiao'er* completes her metamorphosis. This *femme fatale* changes into the opposite of her old self. She not only ceases longing for *Xingge*'s return, she even presents her husband's family heirloom to her lover, without any consideration for its possible discovery by *Xingge*. One can interpret the relationship between *Sanqiao'er* and *Xingge* as a cycle, similar to the relationship between *Sanqiao'er* and *Dalang*. The word "cycle" refers to the similar pattern in the two relationships. When *Xingge* and *Sanqiao'er* are newly wedded, *Xingge* abandons

[25] Jeanne Kelly, trans., "The Pearl Shirt Reencountered," Ma and Lau 281.

his father's business and stays with his wife in the chamber upstairs, giving himself over to pleasure from dawn until dusk for four years. When *Xingge* decides to leave to take care of his neglected business, *Sanqiao'er* promises to stay in the back portion of the house and for one year, waits patiently for his return. Then, *Chen Dalang* and Granny *Xue*'s scheme results in the once chaste wife discarding her morality and deciding to carry on with her adultery. Since *Xingge* is absent, the six months of *Sanqiao'er* and *Dalang*'s togetherness is like being married but living under the husband's roof. *Chen Dalang*'s eventualy departure returns *Sanqiao'er* to her previous situation after her husband left her. Once again, she waits patiently for one year, but in the future, her loneliness for companionship will probably return. Who can guarantee that another *Chen Dalang* and Granny *Xue* will not appear before the return of either her husband or her lover? In any case, after abandoning her wifely devotion, *Sanqiao'er* receives her retribution. After being divorced by her husband, the adulteress then becomes the concubine of a county magistrate, *Wu Jie* 吳傑. Later, she reunites with her husband but must accept a lower rank as his concubine.

Two questions arise at this point in the discussion of *Sanqiao'er*'s adultery. First, can the illicit affair be simply explained as a case of the charming *femme fatale* fueling *Dalang*'s desperate aggressiveness, which results in her passive submission to the unscrupulous affair? Or alternatively, is *Sanqiao'er*'s submission caused by her frantic need for affection, which can explain her mistaken identification of *Dalang* as her husband, as well as her accommodating acceptance of Granny *Xue*'s friendship? The story's narrator believes that the answer lies not in the cause of *Sanqiao'er*'s adultery, but in the effect. That is, *Sanqiao'er* commits adultery, and yet when *Xingge* divorces her, an expected retribution, she feels remorse and does not blame anyone else. Her unfaithfulness suggests "that loyalty to one's body and spirit is not always incompatible with love for one's husband, that adultery does not necessarily mean marital

unfaithfulness,"[26] or, as Patrick Hanan comments, "The tale demonstrates that, in extreme circumstances, a good woman may be a willing adulteress and yet not lose her residual love for her husband."[27] After the revelation of her infidelity, *Sanqiao'er* returns to her previously submissive role, which contrasts with her aggressive behavior prior to the attempted elopement with *Dalang*.

Sanqiao'er's charm and beauty not only attract her husband and her lover, but also indirectly cause the promiscuous lover's death and destroy her happy marriage. Her retribution illustrates McMahon's remark that "the ending of ... illicit love is like a burst of the bubble and leaves room for nothing but disaster."[28]

b) *WU NIANGZI* 巫娘子

Wu Niangzi is another *femme fatale* whose charm drives her admirer to devise a scheme to obtain her in order to satisfy what Ding Yaokang would call a "sex maniac's lust" (*xiong-huang yin* 兇荒淫). However, her involvement with her admirer results in neither happiness nor death, but in her awareness that she is no longer a chaste wife and in her husband's careless moral attitude towards her defilement.

Unlike the lonely *Sanqiao'er*'s change of heart for her lover after he defiles her, *Wu Niangzi* feels nothing for the lecher *Bu Liang* 卜良 after he rapes her. Moreover, *Sanqiao'er* assumes an active role in her illicit affair after her adultery, whereas *Wu Niangzi* is passive before and even after her defilement. As a result, we feel more sympathy for the helpless *Wu Niangzi* and more admiration for her determined husband, Scholar *Jia* 賈秀才, who revenges the wrong done to his wife and prevents her suicide attempt, in contrast to the passive *Jiang Xingge*, who merely divorces his wife.

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[26] C. T. Hsia, "Society and Self in the Chinese Short Story," The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968) 320.
[27] Hanan, "The Making of The Pearl-Sewn Shirt and The Courtesan's Jewel Box," HJAS 134.

Wu Niangzi remains passive before and after her rape. During the usual half-year absence of her husband due to his studies, *Wu Niangzi* passes her time on embroidery with frequent visits from *Zhao* the nun 趙尼姑 from *Guanyin* Nunnery (*Guanyin An* 觀音庵). As her husband did not warn her not to look out into the street and as she does not heed propriety, *Wu Niangzi* follows *Zhao*'s suggestion to accompany her guest to her front door. Because of her carelessness, she is observed by the wastrel *Bu Liang* while he is looking for *Zhao*. *Sanqiao'er*'s loneliness makes her a vulnerable target, but ironically, *Wu Niangzi* falls into the hands of her victimizers because of her good intentions for her husband. She consents to go to the nunnery to learn to read a sutra in order to pray for a son for her husband. After two days of a vegetarian diet, she arrives with an empty stomach at the nunnery and eats a sponge cake made with wine by *Zhao*. After consuming the cake, the chaste wife falls helplessly into the hands of the rapist, *Bu Liang*. Instead of committing suicide after the rape, *Wu Niangzi* prays to her embroidered Buddha for revenge on her rapist. During her sincere prayer, her husband dreams of his wife's embroidered Buddha before he learns about her defilement after he returns home the next day.

Despite her husband's forgiveness and the deaths of both *Bu Liang* and *Zhao*, the beautiful *Wu Niangzi* still cannot forget that another man has taken advantage of her body. During the time of the story, "it was deemed crucial for women to lead a blameless life."[29] Thus, at the beginning of the story, the narrator warns women against the craftiness of nuns and suggests at the end that "women should not step out of their inner chambers" (*furen buke chu guifang* 婦人不可出閨房).[30] The beautiful and once "chaste" wife *Wu Niangzi* does not follow this advice, and, as a result, she becomes a rapist's victim.

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[28] McMahon, T'oung Pao 259.
[29] Wei-hung Lin, "Chastity in Chinese Eyes: *Nan-nu Yu-pieh*," Chinese Studies 9.2 (1991): 26.
[30] Ling, "*Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niwen mihua jizhongji Jia Xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花 機中機賈秀才報怨," *Chuke Paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 88.

By nature, *Sanqiao'er* and *Wu Niangzi* are passive. Although the two stay within their inner chambers, their "aura of charm" still attract pursuers from the street. Just a glimpse of them is enough to stir up turmoil for these two chaste wives. Although each wife is manipulated by a mediator, loneliness is the main reason why *Sanqiao'er* falls for *Chen Dalang* after their rendezvous, and the desire to bear a son for her husband results in *Wu Niangzi*'s rape in the nunnery. Both pursuers receive their retribution -- *Chen Dalang* loses his life and wife to *Jiang Xingge* and *Bu Liang* loses his life because of Scholar *Jia*'s scheme. However, both wives also suffer losses: *Sanqiao'er* loses her status as *Jiang Xingge*'s first wife, while *Wu Niangzi* is no longer considered by the narrator to be "chaste."

Thus, even though the two "dispositional" wives do not misbehave intentionally, their charm still causes unforeseeable disasters. From the narrators' point of view, no retribution can allow these two beautiful wives to redeem themselves for their sins.

As we have seen, courtesans are required to expose their beauty to men in order to earn a living, but beautiful wives who stay in their houses are still not fully protected from disaster. *Sanqiao'er* looks from her window at *Chen Dalang* because she mistakes him for her husband after the fortune teller predicts his imminent return. *Wu Niangzi* carelessly exposes herself to the street because of *Zhao*'s suggestion. Although the women reveal themselves very briefly and never leave their homes while doing so, their "aura of charm" is still enough to provoke the men who accidentally glimpse their beauty to pursue them. One might wonder about maidens who, like the wives, always remain in their homes, but, unlike the wives, have no third party to either stir up their hope or arouse their interest. In the absence of both a female broker (*yapo* 牙婆) and nun (*nigu* 尼姑), are these virginal maidens safe from defilement? This question will be answered when we turn to *Wang Jiaoluan* 王嬌鸞, a maiden who resides in her home with her closest daily companions: her Aunt *Cao* 曹姨 and her waiting-maid, *Mingxia* 明霞.

iii. Maiden

The maidens who are considered to be dispositional *femmes fatales* are gifted with *jiaren* 佳人(beauty); these stereotypical maidens appear in *Caizi jiaren* 才子佳人 fiction (the Scholar-Beauty fiction). With their beauty and literary talents, especially in poetry composition, these beautiful maidens always unknowingly attract their pursuers. As is expected in a heaven-made relationship, their male counterparts are also attractive and talented,[31] so that they can measure up to the maidens' perfection. In a typical *Caizi jiaren* story, regardless of the location where the future lovers' initial encounter takes place--in a courtyard, a temple or during a trip—and the number of obstacles the two lovebirds face during their courtship, their frequent exchange of poems ensures that the morally self-controlled scholar and the beauty will eventually reunite with their parents' blessings. As occurs in a fairy tale, the couple live happily hereafter.

However, maidens who are dispositional *femmes fatales* do not achieve the same kind of harmonious marriage. After giving her virginity away to her lover as proof of her enduring love, a maiden can hope only that his family will propose marriage in the near future. Without this prospective offer, the loss of virginity prevents a maiden from acquiring first-wife status in her marriage, and her exposed misconduct will disgrace herself and her parents. Therefore, a maiden in this situation will frequently commit suicide as her only option.

a) *WANG JIAOLUAN* 王嬌鸞

[31] For the necessary features required in both *caizi* 才子(scholar) and *jiaren* 佳人 (beauty), see Hu Wanchuan 胡萬川, *Huaben yu Caizi Jiaren Xiaoshuo zhi Yanjiu* 話本與才子佳人小說之研究 (The Research on *Huaben* and the Scholar-Beauty Fiction) (Taibei: Daan chubanshe, 1994) 208-10.

Wang Jiaoluan is one of the unfortunates. Unlike *Chen Yulan* 陳玉蘭, who, at the age of nineteen, is still unmarried because of her father's three strenuous criteria for choosing his son-in-law (*Yushi mingyan* 4), *Jiaoluan*'s delayed marriage is caused by her father's pickiness. Proficient in literary composition, the beautiful *Jiaoluan* waits patiently for a man who can match up to her standards, disregarding her emotional and sexual needs. Therefore, once a handsome scholar neighbor, *Zhou Tingzhang* 周廷章, begins to send her poems after he looks through a crack in his wall and sees her swinging with her aunt and maid in her courtyard, *Jiaoluan* wastes no time in impressing him with her poetic correspondence. Thinking that he is the perfect match for her beauty and literary talent, the maiden decides to take control of her love affair. Because of *Tingzhang*'s persistent sincerity in pursuing her, she finally lowers her guard and allows him to deflower her.

Although she allows her heart to override her moral sense, *Jiaoluan* still has her own fear. Knowing that she no longer can claim to be a maiden, *Jiaoluan* can only hope that *Tingzhang* will carry out his promise to send her a marriage proposal within a year. With her repeated request for confirmation of his faithfulness before and after their clandestine affair, *Jiaoluan* is insecure about her future prospects as his wife. *Tingzhang* betrays her by consenting to his father's marriage arrangement after he returns home, confirming her insecurity and her fear that her lover will change his heart once she is out of his sight. Similar to the courtesan *Du Shiniang*, *Jiaoluan* is strung by her feeling of betrayal, her unrequited love for her lover, and her disappointment in herself (*youyan wuzhu* 有眼無珠). She cannot help feeling devastated after *Tingzhang*'s only reply to her letters is the return of both her gauze veil and his copy of their marriage agreement. Besides revenge, the disappointed *Jiaoluan* has no other option but suicide, so she hangs herself with the same gauze veil, which figured in the beginning of their clandestine affair. Before she kills herself, she confirms the old

saying that the flip side of love is hate, and she revenges her betrayal and the defilement of her chastity.

As for *Zhou Tingzhang*, his retribution of death is just. Although he proposes marriage to *Jiaoluan* after he initiates their illicit affair, the scholar does not remain faithful to her. Once he learns of his father's arranged ideal marriage for him, his lust and greed prevent him from either rejecting the offer or revealing his prior marriage vow to *Jiaoluan*. He gladly accepts his father's arrangement and immediately terminates his relationship with *Jiaoluan* by ignoring her letters. The destruction of his reputation and his eventual death are a just repayment for the maiden's life.

Although *Wang Jiaoluan* is passive when her "aura of charm" first arouses *Zhang Tingzhang*, she soon assumes an active role: she sends him her poetic correspondence, consents to their pre-nuptial pleasure, and sends her maid to fetch the scholar to meet with her after their illicit affair begins. Gradually an unforeseeable obsession builds in *Jiaoluan*, which becomes stronger than *Tingzhang*'s initial infatuation for her. As her insecurity about her loss of virginity and his need to return home increases, so does her urgent need to confirm his faithfulness. For *Tingzhang*, *Jiaoluan* is just a challenge to his male capability, and the sincerity of his love for her is doubtful. Although *Tingzhang* at first works hard to be together with the maiden, once he takes her maidenhood as his trophy, his infatuation for her starts to decline. Otherwise, the scholar would write to her and reject his father's marriage arrangement, even though his proposed bride, *Wei Shi* 魏氏, has both beauty and wealth.

In the stories about *Sanqiao'er* and *Wu Niangzi*, a female broker and a nun, respectively, infiltrate the wives' homes and carry out the requests of the wives' pursuers. In contrast, *Wang Jiaoluan* remains within her home and has no woman deceiving her. Nevertheless, she is still deflowered by a man who cannot resist her beauty.

II. The Situational Type: the *Femme fatale* who "lures men into dangerous or compromising situations"

Unlike the women whose "aura of charm" attracts men, the *femmes fatales* of this class intentionally seduce men to fall for them, almost always for two reasons: greed or lust. "The women … are active participants in their own destiny. They take the initiative in seduction, show considerable ingenuity and strength of mind, and often dominate their husbands and lovers."[32] These *femmes fatales* are opportunistic seductresses with minimal emotional attachment. Love rarely plays a role in their relationship with men, and for these women, sex is an occupation and a means to an end. Although they can foresee the destructive consequences of their "sexual aggression and dangerous cunning,"[33] they continue to strive for their goal no matter what the cost.

In pursuing the situational type of temptress, the lechers are the ultimate disbelievers in common expressions associated with the danger of sex. Disregarding the orthodox beliefs that "Lust is the first among a thousand evil things" (萬惡淫爲首) and the later colloquial expression "Sex is equivalent to a knife above the head" (色是頭上一把刀), these lascivious men blindly continue to pursue their objects of desire, without realizing they are risking their lives at the same time.

Four female protagonists can be classified as situational *femmes fatales* in the *Sanyan* and *Erpai*, but none is present in *Xingshi hengyan* and *Chuke paian jingqi*. The situational type's presence in *Sanyan Erpai* can be explained as serving the purpose of a didactic story, for the protagonist must be punished, whether the punishment is fair, severe or fatal. However, three of the four *femmes*

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[32] Anne E. McLaren, trans. and introduction, The Chinese Femme Fatale: Stories from the Ming Period. (Australia: Wild Peony Pty Ltd., 1994) 1.

fatales in the selected stories receive only minor or almost no retributions. Because of the light punishments received by these calculating and manipulative seductresses, the intended didacticism of the collections is not as powerful as that in the stories portraying the dispositional and deviational types of *femme fatale*.

Similar to the dispositional type, the situational type of *femme fatale* exists among prostitutes and maidens. However, unlike the passive wives who unintentionally exert their "aura of charm" to attract the opposite sex, the aggressive and licentious situational *femme fatale* intentionally seduces men to gratify her lustful desire and greed.

Two prostitutes, a concubine and a maiden selected from *Sanyan Erpai* portray this type of woman. The prostitutes are *Jinnu* 金奴 (*Xinqiaoshi Han Wu mai chunqing* 新橋市韓五賣春情,[34] *Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charms at the New Bridge Market) and *Zhao Xianjun* 趙縣君 (*Zhao Xianjun qiaosong huanggan Wu Xuanjiao ganchang baiqiang* 趙縣君喬送黃柑 吳宣教乾償白鏹,[35] Madam *Zhao* Pretends to send Yellow Oranges, Officer *Wu* is Unfairly Paid in Vain). The concubine is represented by *Zhou Chunxiang* 周春香 (*Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia* 喬彥傑一妾破家,[36] The Concubine of *Qiao Yanjie* Ruins His Family) and the maiden is *Chen Yulan* 陳玉蘭 (*Xianyun An Ruan San chang yuanzhai* 閒雲菴阮三償冤債,[37] *Ruan* the Third Repays an Unjust Debt in the Idle Cloud Nunnery). The following discussion of the situational *femmes fatales* will begin with the "manipulative and seductive" prostitutes.

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[33] Elizabeth Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978) 15.
[34] Feng, "*Xinqiaoshi Han Wu mai chunqing* 新橋市韓五賣春情 (*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charms at the New Bridge Market)," *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 47-60. For English translation, see Robert C. Miller, Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau, trans., "*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charms at the New Bridge Market," Ma and Lau 312-24.
[35] Ling, "*Zhao Xianjun qiaosong huanggan Wu Xuanjiao ganchang baiqiang* 趙縣君喬送黃柑 吳宣教乾償白鏹," *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 201-18.
[36] Feng, "*Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia* 喬彥傑一妾破家," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 400-12.
[37] Feng, "*Xianyun An Ruan San chang yuanzhai* 閒雲菴阮三償冤債," *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 61-73.

i. Prostitutes

Upper-class courtesans (*mingji* 名妓) and lower-class prostitutes (*jinu* 妓女) both lived under the same blue (*qing* 青) roof. However, the former were said to have "[a] pair of jade-like arms to pillow a thousand men;/ And a pair of red lips to kiss ten thousand guests"[38] (一雙玉臂千人枕，一片朱唇萬客嘗), and "enjoyed a level of renown unattainable by any other type of woman."[39] Dorothy Ko rightly states, "[A] courtesan (*mingji*, literally "famous prostitute") distinguished herself from a mere prostitute (*ji*) by being well known."[40]

Different from the dispositional type of upper-level courtesans, who draw their clients toward them with their artistic talents and "aura of charm," the situational type of low-level prostitute has to go out and search for her potential providers before attracting them with her physical allure. The worlds of each type of pleasure providers are in fact diametrically opposed to each other: the "ideal" world versus the "real" world.

The "ideal" world of the elite courtesans is pure and full of *qing* 情 (sentiments or feelings or love). Living in "an environment in which men and women of comparable talents could socialize freely and openly and develop ties of affection based on physical attraction as well as shared intellectual and artistic talents,"[41] or enjoying relationships akin to that between a beauty (*jiaren* 佳人) and a scholar (*caizi* 才子), the talented courtesan meets her upper-class man of desire among her male clients belonging to the literati. With her untrammeled pursuit of love, the courtesan is either purchased by her lover-client, or she takes her destiny in her own hands and uses her savings to ransom herself from bondage.

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[38] Paul S. Ropp, "Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 37.
[39] Ropp 18.
[40] Dorothy Ko, "The Written Word and the Bound Foot: A History of the Courtesan's Aura," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 78.

In some cases, a courtesan might encourage and enable her lover/husband to return home or to his study and achieve fame, as do *Yutangchun* in *Jingshi tongyan* 24 and *Zhao Chuner* in 31. The scholar's final achievements in the former reconcile him with his father and society, and elevate the courtesan to a higher level of the social ladder. In most cases, after overcoming all obstacles together, the loving couple achieve everlasting harmony.

In contrast, the "real" world of the prostitutes is complex and harsh. Without much savings in hand, the prostitute has to continue to look for a new provider. Love does not exist in a relationship between a prostitute and her patron; it is solely a sexual transaction between them. A prostitute is the true believer in Darwin's theory of survival: only the strong can survive. Neither conscience nor mercy can exist in her real world. Once she spots a wealthy prey, she will waste no time to set up and act according to her scheme in an attempt to lure and trap her lecher successfully.

Jinnu 金奴 and *Zhao Xianjun* 趙縣君 are two disguised prostitutes belonging to the real world. Although they have to lure the type of man whose "libido [makes] him vulnerable to women's wiles, and his blind indulgence [allows] him to be deceived and manipulated,"[42] the former is looking for a long-term provider for herself and her family, while the latter is hired to play a wife in a swindle. Despite their shared goal of becoming financially secure, the situations which *Jinnu* and *Zhao Xianjun* use to entrap their men lead to their unforeseeable destruction, damage that the two victimizers can never redeem. Although the prostitutes themselves receive no apparent retribution, *Jinnu*'s frequent need to relocate and her neighbors' contempt for her and her family, like *Zhao Xianjun*'s long-term prostitution, serve to "punish" both prostitutes for not being willing to reform and live a normal life.

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[41] Ropp 20-1.
[42] Yenne Wu, The Chinese Virago: a literary theme (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995) 60.

a) *JINNU* 金奴

Unlike the previously discussed three renowned courtesans, whose notorious aura of charm draws both wealthy and noble men to compete for their favors, *Jinnu* is a disguised prostitute and the sole supporter of her family. She must leave her inner chamber to look for providers. At first, *Jinnu* intends to slowly lure *Wu Shan* into her trap, but she changes her mind and achieves her goal in just two days. Her sudden success results from her blatant seduction of *Wu Shan*, which catches him off guard.

Jinnu and her family initially plan to rent the rear portion of a shop for a few days. After realizing that *Wu Shan* is the shop owner, *Jinnu* decides to trap him because he can be her potential long-term provider, and she will no longer have to look for customers on regular basis. However, as the narrator comments,

"*Wu* had, at the beginning, thought that she was of a decent family. He had allowed her to stay in the house thinking that he might flirt with her. Who would have thought that once they became somewhat acquainted she would be so aggressive? Only then did he realize that things had gone too far."[43]

Wu's abrupt suggestion that he should depart makes *Jinnu* immediately force herself on him so that he will not have even a slight chance to slip out of her trap. After taking his hairpin, *Jinnu* invites him to go upstairs and talk. His stubborn desire to retrieve his hairpin and his lack of resistance to her sexual temptation lead him to submit to the aggressive prostitute.

Jinnu succeeds in attracting the lecherous *Wu Shan* and convincing him to spend money on her, but her lust cannot be satisfied as easily as her need for

[43] Ma and Lau, "Han Wu-niang Sells Her Charm at the New Bridge Market," 315.

financial security. When an illness forces him to stay away from this female debaucher, she asks her servant to solicit her former customer again. Her insatiable sexual appetite indirectly almost kills her ill lover during his visit to her new home. Knowing that *Wu Shan* is in the process of recovering from his summer illness, this vicious prostitute still has a second round with him. After *Wu Shan*'s dreams of a monk taking his life, *Jinnu*'s disguised identity finally is revealed. Compared to *Wu Shan*'s final destruction, *Jinnu*'s retribution is minor: by losing a long-term provider, she has to resume her degraded occupation and search again for a new potential supporter.

Although *Jinnu*'s profession requires her to use her body as bait to lure men to her trap, *Jinnu* still deserves our pity when we consider her family background. The storyteller appears to agree, for he does not subject her to a severe retribution.

Jinnu's sad family background and the unintended harm she causes provide two possible explanations for her release from retribution. Her father being a good-for-nothing family provider, the family has no other means of support. *Jinnu*'s mother, although from a good family, has to use her body as her only means of supporting her mother and daughter. By growing up in such an environment, *Jinnu* naturally develops a weak sense of morality. Therefore, after the attractive and educated *Jinnu* has been married for some time, she almost inevitably behaves improperly in her husband's home and has extra-marital affairs. Consequently, her husband sends her back to her home. By then, her mother has reached fifty, and her customers are decreasing, so the young daughter takes over the family business and, with her looks and youth, carries it out on an even larger scale. Second, throughout *Jinnu*'s relationship with *Wu Shan*, the disguised prostitute does no intentional harm towards her supporter. Although she makes love to him in spite of his summer sickness, the narrator allows *Jinnu* to walk away from her blame. The fatal illness of *Wu Shan* is caused by his own retribution (*baoying* 報應) due to his lustful pursuits. Thus, the silence of the narrator on

Jinnu's retribution can be interpreted as his moral acceptance of prostitutes' need to trap men in order to earn a living, especially during the *Ming* dynasty when prostitution bloomed as a result of the merchant class's flourishing business opportunities. This sudden increased supply of prostitutes corresponded to the sudden increase in demand, making prostitution a very competitive profession. In order to survive, *Jinnu*, not belonging to the courtesan class, must lure men into compromising situations.

As a practical opportunist in her profession, or as "one who attempts to subdue the man by means of the power of her sexuality,"[44] *Jinnu* uses sex to lure, dominate and monopolize *Wu Shan* for financial reasons. However, she succeeds only temporarily. Although her sexual needs indirectly lead *Wu Shan* to the verge of death, *Jinnu* does not receive a severe retribution, but the loss of *Wu Shan*'s support and the neighbors' rumors, disrespect, and criticism frequently cause her and her family to relocate -- a fair punishment for them all.

b) *ZHAO XIANJUN* 趙縣君

Similar to *Jinnu*, *Zhao Xianjun* is also a disguised educated prostitute. But unlike *Jinnu*, who becomes the master of her own life by choosing her prey, then planning her scheme and trapping her object of desire, *Zhao Xianjun* does not carry out these actions solely for her own financial advantage. On the contrary, she is hired by an impostor to disguise herself as his wife, so he can make a fortune with her beauty by blackmailing her pursuers. This crafty business is called *Zahuodun* 紮火囤.[45]

The nature of this swindle can be well understood by observing the

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[44] McMahon, Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction 13.

[45] A term used to describe an aspect of illicit love between man and woman; a kind of scheme with the use of a pretty woman to ensnare a person for money. See note 39 in Ling, "*Zhao Wuhu heji tiao jiaxin Mo*

association between *Zhao Xianjun* and her selected prey, *Wu Yue* 吳約. *Xianjun*'s skillful temptation of him begins with making a "mystique of her persona."[46] After confirming her quarry's interest, the temptress then starts to carry out her psychological scheme by applying her "advance and retreat" tactics on *Wu Yue* in order to increase his desperate infatuation.

Knowing exactly how to manipulate a man's mentality, *Zhao Xianjun* begins her "advance" tactics by giving *Wu Yue* a taste of sweetness. In order to make him feel that she is interested in him, *Xianjun* asks her boy servant to send *Wu Yue* tangerines and home-made side dishes on two consecutive days. She refuses to receive his reciprocal gifts at first, but finally accepts them. By her conflicting responses and her intended portrayal of herself as a well-bred woman, she wants to send a message to him that she is not someone easy to obtain by currying favor. Therefore, when *Wu Yue* requests an audience with her to thank her for her gifts, *Xianjun* consents to his request, then maintains a stern expression when she receives him, so that he is unable to read her mind, despite her subsequent poetry exchanges with him. With her perfect understanding that the more unattainable she makes herself, the more *Wu Yue* will want her, *Xianjun* continues to act contradictorily toward her pursuer. For instance, again applying her advance-and-retreat tactics during their subsequent meeting, *Xianjun* sends over her boy servant to announce his madam's birthday so as to provide *Wu Yue* a chance to act accordingly, and then she continues to maintain her stern expression and uses propriety as her excuse for her abrupt withdrawal from their meeting. By playing with *Wu Yue*'s emotions, the temptress increases the intensity of his sexual desires. Therefore, when *Zhao Xianjun* sends her boy servant to invite *Wu Yue* to her bedroom, his focus on the delight awaiting him makes completely unaware of

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Dalang lidi san shenjian 趙五虎合計挑家釁 莫大郎立地散神奸," *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 163.

[46] Wai-yee Li, "The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 64.

the trap he is in. The twenty *taels* he has spent on bribing the boy servant and others in *Zhao*'s household do not grant *Wu Yue* his share of *Zhao*'s bed. Instead, the sudden return of her "husband" (the swindler) and the subsequent threats cause the victim to pay two thousand strings of cash for the swindler's "forgiveness."

Wu Yue's retribution because of his lust not only costs him his ransom along with his precious jewels and goods, but also his life because of his subsequent confusion after he discovers the swindle that has victimized him.

Zhao Xianjun, on the other hand, does not receive any kind of retribution. Unlike *Jinnu*, whom the narrator pities for her upbringing and forgives for her victim's death, *Zhao Xianjun* is not discussed by the narrator of her story. The lack of retribution for this *femme fatale* can be explained simply by the involvement of the third party, the swindler. *Zhao Xianjun* is a "passive agent"[47] in this scheme, hired by the swindler to be the bait in his *Zahuodun* 紮火囤. Despite her skillful manipulation of *Wu Yue* during their association, the temptress is just carrying out her assigned role in the swindler's scheme. *Zhao Xianjun* cannot be considered as an "active agent"[48] in this swindle, so she receives no retribution.

With a well-planned psychologically manipulated scheme in mind, *Zhao Xianjun* is able to use her expertise in "advance then retreat" to increase *Wu Yue*'s infatuation for her, and consequently, his ransom will increase in proportion. Although her plan is a kind of a beauty's scheme (*Meiren Ji* 美人計) with the involvement of an expected sexual relationship, the disguised prostitute shows that with her expertise, she can obtain her fruit [the ransom] without planting her seed [using her body]. While *Zhao Xianjun* receives no retribution, her seduction of *Wu Yue* causes his eventual death before he can assume his new post as an official. (His discovery of the swindle and becoming a laughing-stock are the main causes

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[47] Karl S. Y. Kao, "*Bao* and *Baoying*: Narrative Causality and External Motivations in Chinese Fiction," Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews 11 (1989):

[48] KAO, CLEAR

for his illness.) Thus, *Zhao Xianjun*'s continued participation in the swindle will be likely to lead to her eventual retribution in the course of time.

Despite the similar ages of *Jinnu* and *Zhao Xianjun*, (twenty-four and twenty-three years old, respectively) and their shared identity as disguised educated prostitutes, the differences in their tactics -- the schemes, the timing, and most important, the expected results -- reflect that different situations must be set up for different styles of livelihoods, even among *femmes fatales* of the same situational type.

Because *Jinnu* is the sole supporter for her whole family, she has to act aggressively when she finds a potential target. Time constraints do not allow this prostitute the luxury of waiting for a "big catch"; *Jinnu* is satisfied as long as she catches a long-term provider for both herself and her family. With her immediate needs in mind, *Jinnu* wastes no time and acts aggressively towards *Wu Shan*. After inviting her landlord over for tea and for the signing of lease, right after she moves in with her family, *Jinnu* uses her interest in *Wu Shan*'s hairpin as an excuse and leads him upstairs, then forces herself on him. Although she carries out her aggressive tactics in great haste, she still successfully captures her prey within two days.

In contrast, *Zhao Xianjun* aims for a "big catch." Being hired to play the role of a wife for *Zahuodun*, this temptress neither selects nor plans the scheme. Her role is only to ensure that the scheme's targeted prey will fall for her. By applying her "advance then retreat" tactics, *Zhao Xianjun* is more than successful in manipulating the infatuation of her intended victim, within seven days. When compared to *Jinnu*, *Zhao Xianjun* is the ultimate winner in the pleasure industry. By the end of the swindle, she not only gets two thousands strings of cash out of *Wu Yue* for her employer, she does not even have to sleep with her victim to claim her victory.

Thus, although compared to their victims, the merciless *Jinnu* and *Zhao*

Xianjun do not receive much retribution, the existence of the "Mandate of Heaven" should ensure that these women will one day pay the price for their misdeeds.

Corresponding to the prostitutes *Jinnu* and *Zhao Xianjun*, who step out of their inner chambers in order to trap men for money, a number of wives, concubines and maidens who are residing in their homes unexpectedly are also carrying out the same practices. With comfort already provided by either husbands or fathers, the motivation for these worry-free beauties to lose their chastity is obvious: lust. By examining the situational type of concubine and maiden in the following, can we then determine which kind of desire has more destructive power, the desire for money or the desire for sex?

ii. Concubine

A concubine's position within a family is atypical. She does not have the same respect and privileges as the principal wife; however, she is the favorite of her husband. She is usually present in a family for two main reasons: either she is beautiful and young enough to fulfill her husband's lustful desires, or she is needed to prolong his patrilineal line. In either case, a concubine receives "limitless favor for herself" (萬千寵愛在一身) from her husband and, moreover, from the elders in the family if she bears them an heir.

Applying Katherine Carlitz's term, a concubine of the "situational" type, nevertheless, was considered as *jian* 賤 (a "mean" woman, who could be bought and sold, and was visible/sexually available in public), in contrast to the other type of woman, who was *liang* 良 (a "good" woman, whose ritually complete marriage was supposed to be concluded without financial considerations, and who would live secluded within the family compound).[49] As well, this type of concubine was

[49] Katherine Carlitz, "Desire and Writing in the Late Ming Play "Parrot Island," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 105.

also classified as either "*jian*" and "*liang*" according to her personal thoughts and actions.

The crucial determinants of "thoughts and actions" are discussed by Mencius in his study of "human nature," which, according to him, is "originally" good. From his declaration, "it logically follows (1) that [man] possesses the innate knowledge of the good and 'innate ability' to do good; (2) that evil is not inborn but due to man's own failure and his inability to avoid evil external influences; and (3) that serious efforts must be made to recover our original nature."[50]

An examination of the concubine *Zhou Chunxiang* 周春香 will illustrate that "*jian*" involves more than what Carlitz believes, for "*jian*" refers not only to a concubine's public visibility, but also to her "thoughts and actions."

a) *ZHOU CHUNXIANG* 周春香

Zhou Chunxiang is the concubine of the sub-district deputy, Magistrate *Zhou* 周巡檢. *Chunxiang* receives the same privileges that most concubines enjoy in their positions: favoritism and companionship. However, a concubine has to face harsh reality after her master passes away, as is the case for *Chunxiang*.

During the transportation of her master's coffin to his homeland, *Shandong* 山東, the lustful merchant *Qiao Jun* 喬俊 briefly glimpses *Chunxiang* and then asks the helmsman to inquire of his madam if she will sell *Chunxiang* to be his concubine. Treating her as a commodity, the transaction between the buyer and the seller is then immediately set at one thousand strings of cash. Prior to *Chunxiang*'s arrival at her new home, the narrator declares, "Everybody in the family is dead because of her, ten thousand strings of cash worth of family wealth will be finished in a day" (一家人口因他喪，萬貫家資指日休。)[51]

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[50] Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1963) 50.

[51] Feng, "*Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia* 喬彥傑一妾破家," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 401.

Although this misogynistic statement foretells the ending of the story, a close reading reveals that *Chunxiang*'s "mean" (*jian*) nature is not the single cause of the disaster that falls upon the *Qiao* family. In fact, *Chunxiang* is only the initiator of an interactive combination of misdeeds and miscalculations carried out by a trio of *Qiao* family members including herself – *Chunxiang*, *Qiao Jun* and his wife, *Gao Shi* 高氏 – which contributes to the *Qiaos*' extermination.

The interaction between misdeeds and miscalculations begins with the initiator, *Chunxiang*. Used to having a companion by her side, from the deceased Master *Zhou* to the present *Qiao Jun*, the concubine naturally feels lonely when her husband remains away for longer than he has promised. Her loneliness is further intensified because she is left alone in her own home, where her husband's wife, *Gao Shi*, insists that she must live. As a result of her isolation and prolonged yearning for the return of *Qiao Jun*, *Chunxiang*'s immoral thoughts and actions emerge after she consents to the village elder's suggestion to hire *Dong Xiao'er* 董小二, confirming Mencius' declaration "that evil is not inborn but due to man's own failure and his inability to avoid evil external influences"; in this case, the "evil influences" occur when *Xiao'er* comes to board in *Chunxiang*'s household the whole year round.

Chunxiang targets *Xiao'er* for the sake of *touqing* 偷情 (to steal love, have an illicit affair), and because she targets any convenient man, she is *touhan* 偷漢 (to steal a man);[52] just by chance, this one is her hired laborer, *Dong Xiao'er*. As Katherine Carlitz says of this type of woman, "if she unleashes her desires [*yin*淫], then she cannot but drift into the realms of *jian*."[53]

Similar to *Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒, the dispositional type of *femme fatale* whose need for companionship leads her to cuckold her husband, the equally licentious and depraved *Chunxiang* decides to cuckold her own husband. But unlike the

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[52] McMahon, T'oung Pao 235.
[53] Carlitz, Writing Women in Late Imperial China 105.

chaste wife whose aura of charm attracts a pursuer, *Chen Dalang* 陳大郎, who then schemes to fulfill his lustful desires, the lewd *Chunxiang* is the one who sets up a situation to lure her servant *Xiao'er* to her bosom. Without the presence of her husband, and since their relationship is not based on love but lust, the concubine frees herself from moral constraints: she disregards the segregation of the sexes (*nannu zhifang*) (男女之防)[54] and transgresses the normal boundary between a master and a servant. Beside her constant flirtations with *Xiao'er*, she further reverses the role between a madam and a servant by making hot meals ready when he returns from labor, just as a wife serves her husband. On New Year's Eve, when she suggests that her servant spend the night in her bedroom, he resists, and so the lascivious, lonely concubine picks up *Xiao'er* and carries him to her bed. *Chunxiang*'s subsequent devious thoughts and actions prolong her adultery with her servant: she suggests that the wife, *Gao Shi*, take the hard-working *Xiao'er* as her son-in-law. Later *Chunxiang* conceals *Xiao'er*'s seduction of *Qiao Jun*'s only daughter, *Yuxiu*, but without considering *Gao Shi*'s furious nature.

Despite the role she plays as an initiator, *Chunxiang*'s responsibility for the forthcoming disaster ends at this point. The impulsiveness of the wife, *Gao Shi*, then leads directly to her family's destruction, which results from her four miscalculations. First, she demands that her husband, *Qiao Jun*, reside in a separate house with his concubine, *Chunxiang*, and she insists that he is responsible for any subsequent household affairs. According to the narrator, these two demands create the conditions needed to instigate *Chunxiang*'s immoral thoughts and actions, for the first demand leads to the concubine's loneliness, and the second leads *Chunxiang* to consent to the village elder's suggestion to hire *Dong Xiao'er*. *Gao Shi*'s second miscalculation is her consent to *Chunxiang*'s

[54] A term referring to the "precautions safeguarding the relations between men and women". See Wei-hung Lin's article on "Chastity in Chinese Eyes: *Nan-Nu Yu-Pieh*," Chinese Studies 9.2 (1991): 21-5.

request to bring along *Xiao'er* when she moves back to the main quarters. Thinking only that her own presence will be an obstacle to the adulterous couple, *Gao Shi* does not take precautions against the presence of a young adult man in her household where her nineteen-year-old daughter, *Yuxiu*, also resides. Therefore, when *Yuxiu* is seduced and made pregnant by the servant, the furious mother can only think of revenge by killing *Xiao'er* and disposing of his corpse in the river, which is her third miscalculation. Finally, *Gao Shi*'s fourth miscalculation is her resistance against the blackmail by the vagrant *Wang Jiujiu.* Because of her refusal to submit, *Wang Jiujiu* reports the murder case to the court, which orders the subsequent deaths of the entire *Qiao* household and the confiscation of their property. With her four miscalculations, *Gao Shi* not only creates the conditions for *Chunxiang*'s subsequent depraved actions, she also indirectly causes the final extermination of her entire household.

Although the husband, *Qiao Jun*, has only minor responsibility for the disasters that fall upon his family due to his prolonged absence from home, this same absence allows the women's misdeeds and miscalculations to occur and to reinforce each other. The saying "[The] relations that money buys are conveniently ephemeral"[55] goes together with the common male syndrome of "liking the new and tiring of the old" (*xi xin yan jiu* 喜新厭舊).[56] After six months with his new concubine, *Chunxiang*, *Qiao Jun* again visits the pleasure quarter, has a liaison with a prostitute named *Shen Ruilian* 沈瑞蓮, and does not return home at his promised time. Both his lust and irresponsibility as a husband allow his family to become dysfunctional, beginning with his first retribution of being cuckolded by his lonely concubine. Although *Qiao Jun* pays with his life for his misconduct and irresponsibility by drowning himself in the river, he still cannot

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[55] McMahon, Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction 49.
[56] McMahon, 238.

redeem himself from sacrificing both his family and wealth for the kind of lewd thoughts that arise from easy living (*baonuan si yinyu* 飽暖思淫慾).

Thus, by setting up a "situation" to trap a man in order to fulfill her lustful desires, *Chunxiang*'s "mean" (*jian*) thoughts and actions destroy the entire *Qiao* household, and she pays with her own life as her retribution for committing adultery and disrupting a family. In contrast with the desires of earlier two prostitutes, *Chunxiang*'s desire for sex overrides her desire for money, for her comfortable life does not prevent her from cuckolding her husband. Although in *Zhao Xianjun*'s case, her victim dies, his death is caused by his own stubbornness after discovering that he is the victim in a swindle: *Xianjun* does not intentionally cause harm to her victim. On the other hand, with a relationship founded only on lust, *Chunxiang* does not show much restraint when pressured to kill her paramour, *Dong Xiao'er*, who has seduced *Gao Shi*'s only daughter, *Yuxiu*. The subsequent blackmailing by the vagrant *Wang Jiujiu* causes the *Qiao* family to meet its doom. With this story's usual "taut sequence of temptation, sex, pregnancy, murder, and suicide,"[57] this *femme fatale* is still the person to blame for the initiating of her secret liaisons.

iii. Maiden

Like the concubine *Chunxiang*, the maiden *Chen Yulan* 陳玉蘭 also has improper thoughts arising from her easy living. However, unlike *Chunxiang*'s affair, *Chen Yulan*'s is not caused simply by lust, and unlike *Wang Jiaoluan*'s affair (*Jingshi tongyan* 34), *Chen Yulan*'s is not caused by her own pickiness in selecting a husband. Rather, *Chen Yulan*'s affair results from her father's choosiness in finding a son-in-law who has a suitable social standing and the skills necessary to match *Chen Yulan*'s talents (*cai* 才).

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[57] Patrick Hanan, The Chinese Vernacular Story (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981) 109.

At this point, a brief overview of the issue of talents for women is relevant. Around the seventeenth century, a popular misogynistic dictum, "A woman without talent indeed is a virtue" (女子無才便是德), circulated among both men and women of the gentry. Men should have ensured that women would "receive a good education and become accomplished and well respected in their respective fields,"[58] as was advocated by Ban Zhao. Instead, "[male] insecurity may … have played a role in the exclusion of most women from opportunities for a proper education. Assuming women to be intellectually inferior, men may have secretly feared that they could become equal or superior after obtaining an education."[59]

A society adhering to the traditional belief that a maiden's eventual role is to be a devoted wife and a respectful mother emphasizes a maiden's training in domesticities, and discourages the pursuit of female intellectual and artistic talents. As mentioned in Chapter One, people in general during the *Ming* dynasty assumed that talent and immorality must co-exist in a courtesan. As Dorothy Ko argues, this belief "construed a woman's talents (*cai*) and vitues (*de*) to be mutually exclusive, and suggested that an advanced literary and cultural education was detrimental to her moral cultivation."[60] Nevertheless, as Ko further argues, "talent and virtue were compatible and in fact mutually reinforcing,"[61] and the gradual emergence of *guixiu* 閨秀, literally "elegance from the inner quarters," denoting an upper-class woman with artistic talent,[62] confirms her argument that "talent" (*cai* 才) and "virtue" (*de* 德) could exist under the same roof.

At this point, a question might arise: "If 'talent' and 'virtue' can mutually reinforce each other, then what about the validity of the age-old belief that they are

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[58] Lily Xiao Hong Lee, The Virtue of Yin: Studies on Chinese Women (Australia: Wild Peony Pty., 1994) 1.
[59] Wu 34.
[60] Dorothy Ko, "Pursuing Talent and Vitue: Education and Women's Culture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century China," Late Imperial China 13.1 (1992): 9.
[61] Ko, 9.
[62] Ko, "The Written Word and the Bound Foot: A°History of the Courtesan's Aura," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, 80.

mutually exclusive"? By examining the maiden *Chen Yulan*, one can answer both this question and its corollary: "How much 'talent' can a woman have before she endangers her 'virtue'?"

a) *CHEN YULAN* 陳玉蘭

"Matching a bamboo door with a bamboo door and a wooden door with a wooden door" (竹門對竹門，木門對木門) is a common consideration for fathers who are selecting suitable mates for their children. Especially for the gentry, the qualities of a potential son- or daughter-in-law reflect the social status of the father's family. This is the case for the sixteen-year-old talented maiden *Chen Yulan*.

Although *Yulan*'s aggressiveness in attracting her desired man, *Ruan Sanlang* (*Ruan Hua*), contributes to his eventual death and her loss of maidenhood, unwanted pregnancy and chance to be a principal wife, the narrator nevertheless provides two excuses for her *femme fatale*'s behavior. In order to minimize *Chen Yulan*'s responsibility for her misconduct and her subsequent destruction, the narrator first blames her parents: "For families who have daughters, because their only concern is choosing the matching family, by clambering high and disliking the low, they delay the date of their [children's] marriages. Since their love buds have already bloomed, who can endure it?"[61] These comments clearly blame *Chen Yulan*'s father for her immoral conduct. Taking both his reputation and his daughter's talents into consideration, the stern father sets three criteria in choosing his son-in-law. As a result, after three years of waiting, the maiden decides to take the matter into her own hands. Near the end of the story, the narrator once again deflects blame away from *Yulan* by inserting her dream of the deceased *Ruan Sanlang*. This dream assure the reader that his death is pre-destined because of his

betrayal of *Yulan* in his previous life. Despite *Yulan*'s initial aggressiveness in attracting him, he is still destined to meet his death in due course. Nevertheless, regardless of how the narrator minimizes *Yulan*'s role in her own downfall and her lover's death, her conduct as a *femme fatale* still needs to be analyzed.

In order to fulfill her own psychological and physical needs, the talented *Yulan* refuses to accept either her father's wishes or the orthodox code of morality that emphasizes the virtue of chastity. Despite the common belief that "women who pursue their own sexual desires have a catastrophic effect on family,"[63] *Yulan* sets up a situation to trap her prey, *Ruan Sanlang*, after twice hearing his music in the street. *Yulan*'s initial encounter with *Sanlang*, therefore, creates a situation in which her aura of charm exercises its power on him and his subsequent behavior.

After hearing his music for the second time, the inexperienced *Yulan* allows her mind to follow her heart first by sending her maid *Biyun* 碧雲 to *Ruan Sanlang* to request a meeting with him. As the old saying goes, "When woman goes for a man, there is only a piece of paper in between" (女子偷郎隔重紙), and *Sanlang* readily consents to *Yulan*'s request. Second, when *Sanlang* tells her maid that he may be discovered in *Yulan*'s household, the maiden immediately asks her maid to give him her (*Yulan*'s) gold diamond ring as his token pass. Thirdly, after the nun *Wang Shouchang* delivers *Sanlang*'s reply, *Yulan* then requests the nun to arrange a tryst with him. Finally, *Yulan* ignores her mother's objections to her going to the nunnery and does not consider the inappropriateness of revealing herself to outsiders.

However, *Yulan*'s responsibility for the eventual retributions ends after she meets *Ruan Sanlang* in her garden. From then on, *Ruan Sanlang*, his friend *Zhang Yuan*, and the nun make the arrangements for the illicit love affair; like the wife *Gao Shi* in the story of the concubine *Zhou Chunxiang*, *Ruan Sanlang* and his two helpers contribute to the disaster that follows an illicit love affair. However,

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[63] McLaren 1.

without *Yulan*'s insistence on meeting with her beloved, *Zhang Yuan* and the nun would not have sneaked *Sanlang* into the nunnery before *Yulan*'s arrival.

Ironically, the day when the young *femme fatale* successfully has her man is also the day *Sanlang* when meets his end. As Anne E. McLaren states, "[F]emale sexuality was a threatening force which could lead to male debilitation and loss of virility."[64] Thus, with his overpowering sexual desire for *Yulan*, the lecher ignores his health and ends up dying at the conclusion of their rendezvous. *Ruan Sanlang* thereby pays with his life for a moment of bliss, and *Yulan* pays with an unwanted pregnancy for her insistence in carrying out a tryst.

As an aggressive situational type of *femme fatale*, *Yulan* gives up her chastity and boldly initiates the encounter, allowing her pursuer (*Sanlang*) to fall for her bait and letting fate take its own course. Her immoral act, like *Sanlang*'s misdeeds, receives a just retribution because she sacrifices her reputation and her future chance for a legitimate marriage. That is, *Yulan*'s defilement and pregnancy disgrace her and her family's reputation. Thus, the story shows that a woman with talent can also be virtuous (her son succeeds in the imperial examinations and is promoted to a high official post, and she is given a honorific arch to honor her virtue). For this reason, *Yulan* is "praised and glorified" in the ending.

Ruan Sanlang receives an appropriate retribution by losing his life for carrying out his plan to defile a maiden. The narrator uses *Yulan*'s dream to provide a belated explanation for *Sanlang*'s death: this dream reveals that *Sanlang* in his previous life was a man from *Nanjing* 南京 and betrayed *Yulan* during her previous existence as a *Yangzhou* 揚州 courtesan. The latter part of the story, where she is praised and glorified because of her determination to bring up *Sanlang*'s son and refusal to remarry, encourages the reader to overlook her role in her disgrace and her lover's death.

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[64] McLaren 9.

III. The Deviational Type: the *Femmes Fatales* who "fall into their own desires"

The term "deviational" refers to females who have digressed from the intrinsic nature of the *femme fatale*: they are destroyed by their own uncontrollable desires. Rather than destroying only their male victims, the unscrupulous women of this category are unable to prevent themselves from being victimized by their own obsession and infatuation. In the process, they often receive a more severe retribution than that inflicted on their lovers. Stories about these *femme fatales* illustrate that by harming other individuals, these women are also destroying themselves.

Similar to the first two types of *femme fatale*, the deviational type includes widows in addition to the usual wives and maidens. However, this type differs from the first in two main ways. First, this type includes nuns who act contrary to their teachings. Second, courtesans and prostitutes are completely absent among the deviational type, contrasting with the four courtesans in the dispositional type and the two prostitutes in the situational type. This absence probably reflects compiler Feng Menglong's personal bias towards courtesans, an issue that will be discussed in the conclusion.

The two anthologies being studied include nine dispositional, four situational, and twenty-nine deviational *femmes fatales*. Because of the large number of *femmes fatales* in the third category, the following discussion will analyze two stories portraying widows and one story portraying each of nuns, wives, and maidens.

i. Widows

In traditional Chinese society, widows (*guafu* 寡婦) are either praised or ridiculed. A widow who displays her loyalty to her deceased husband by becoming celibate or joining him in death earns a splendid reputation in society and her family. As Susan Mann has pointed out, the promotion of Confucian models of moral behavior by aggressive government campaigns, especially in the *Yuan* 元 and early *Ming* 明 dynasties (including the construction of monumental arches honoring chaste women and the imperial inscriptions of merit to families of chaste widows and female martyrs), contributed to the "repetitious formulaic stories of women [in biographies of women] who commit suicide in the name of chastity or who dedicate their lives to serving their parents-in-law in the name of celibate widowhood."[65] The reinforcement provided by official state policy, combined with women's own desire to emulate the official ideal, glorified the quintessential image of chaste widows (*jiefu* 節婦) who neither remarry nor lose their chastity (*shishen* 失身). As the saying goes, "It is a small matter to starve to death, but a large matter to lose one's chastity" (*esi shixiao shijie shida* 餓死事小，失節事大). On the other hand, compared to the arduous task of maintaining a chaste widowhood, a widow's respect can be easily lost by a sole violation of her chastity -- from stepping out of her inner chamber for a flirtatious gaze, to the committing of adultery. Thus, a widow's "unique" "self-containment"[66] determines how much respect she receives.

Chaste widowhood includes a constant tension between idealism and realism. Ideally, a widow wants to be an exemplar of chastity to others because of her devoted love for her deceased husband. The advantage of being a "successful"

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[65] Susan Mann, Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 2.

[66] A term used by Keith McMahon to describe one's self-completion, a feeling of adequacy within boundaries, such as those of body and soul. For a detailed description of this term, see Robert Keith McMahon, The Gap in the Wall: Containment and Abandon in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction, diss., Princeton U, 1984, (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984) 15-19.

chaste widow was reinforced by *Ming-Qing* law. The late imperial law granted "widows the strongest rights of any women with regard to property and independence – but these rights depended on chastity, a status violated by either remarriage or adultery."[67] Thus, unlike her sisters living in poverty, a widow from an elite family cannot consider the option of remarriage. However, in order for a widow to remain chaste, her idealism has to be stronger than the opposing force of realism. In this context, "realism" refers to the psychological and the physical aspects of widowhood. In ancient times, the mobility of women is restricted to their inner chambers, and a husband becomes his wife's only companion: he is the only one she can turn to and trust once she leaves her own family. In addition, since women usually marry in their early teens, the instinctive sexual needs of young widows – in their twenties or early thirties – are always an important factor. Thus, a widow's overwhelming loneliness and sexuality make her prone to adultery. Although celibacy is the ideal choice for a widow, remarriage is better than becoming an object of disgrace, so many widows will remarry rather live a life of suppression. Consequently, a widow who values her "self-containment" is caught up in a struggle between idealism and realism.

Widow *Shao Shi* 邵氏 and the widow-mother *Wu Shi* 吳氏 are two widows who fail to sustain their "self-containment." Beginning their widowhood at a young age, both are economically independent and living by themselves. Matthew H. Sommer comments that "a widow with property was subject to a minimum of direct supervision: she was the patriarchal authority in her dead husband's household. … This practical autonomy created a space for personal freedom that sometimes produced highly unorthodox results: the independence justified by chastity provided the opportunity for adultery."[68] However, this kind

[67] Matthew H. Sommer, "The Uses of Chastity: Sex, Law, and the Property of Widows in Qing China," Late Imperial China 17.2 (1996): 77.
[68] Sommer, 78.

of opportunity proves to be fatal for *Shao Shi* and *Wu Shi*; although their willful misconduct has different causes, they and their male victims receive the same retribution: death.

a) *SHAO SHI* 邵氏

Wanting to be respected for being a chaste young widow, *Shao Shi* impractically chooses to be celibate at the age of twenty-three. When making her fatal vow, she does not consider possible hardships, especially her need for male companionship: "Now that my late husband rests below the Nine Springs, if I serve another family and take a second husband, I shall either perish under a knife or die by the rope."[69] By challenging herself and rejecting her parents' and relatives' suggestions that she should remarry, or by choosing a supremely difficult but virtuous path over an easy but shameful alternative,[70] the young widow must then try to live according to her high ideals. Either to demonstrate her will power or possibly to prevent potential temptation, *Shao Shi* immediately dismisses all her male servants who are more than nineteen years old. However, despite her strong will and her ten years of widowhood, her ability to endure a lifetime of loneliness is still doubtful. Realistically, after six years of constant companionship with her husband, *Shao Shi* will have great difficulty living by herself at such a young age. Although she has the companionship of her maid, *Xiu Gu* 秀姑, and her male child servant, *Degui* 得貴, *Shao Shi* does not have the comfort of a man. Her lengthy suppression of both her emotional and sexual needs in order to carry out her glorious vow of chastity creates a constant tension within her between her internal needs and her desire to remain chaste. Perhaps inevitably, after years of prolonged suppression, *Shao Shi* gradually lowers her guard against temptation. At the same

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[69] C. T. Hsia and Susan Arnold Zonana, trans., "The Case of the Dead Infant," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations. By Feng Menglong. Eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 123.

time, the "ne-er-do-well" *Zhi Zhu* 支助 moves into her neighborhood. In spite of her firm desire to remain chaste, *Shao Shi* finally has little choice but to yield to her suppressed human needs after ten years of widowhood. The intensity of these needs is suggested by her absolutely liberated responses, three nights in a row, to the sight of her naked seventeen-year-old male servant, *Degui*.

On the first night, after *Shao Shi* sees *Degui* sleeping naked on his bed, the widow gives him neither a sound scolding nor a beating the next day. According to the narrator, she forgives *Degui*'s outrageous behavior because "she [has] lived alone for so long that it [seems] to her the experience of seeing that rare thing [will] lengthen her life by a dozen years, and so she [keeps] absolutely mum."[71] On the second night, when *Shao Shi* once again sees the naked *Degui*, she asks her maid to pull a sheet over him without waking him because "[this] time she [is] somewhat aroused, but since *Xiu Gu* [is] around she [cannot] very well do anything."[72] Finally, on the third night, *Shao Shi* decides to go alone on her tour of inspection and ends up sleeping her naked servant. As occurs in the story about the concubine *Zhou Chunxiang* 周春香 and her servant *Dong Xiao'er* 董小二, *Shao Shi* and *Degui* also transgress the normal boundary between a madam and her servant. But unlike *Zhou Chunxiang*, who initiates her illicit affair, *Shao Shi* falls into a trap set by a lecher to test her self-containment. As predicted by the lecher's helper, *Zhi Zhu*, the widow yields.

The three nights of temptation transform *Shao Shi*. After finally choosing to submit to the seduction, the once chaste widow completely abandons her previous morality. First, she continues to sleep with her servant nightly, using her inspection tour as an excuse. Second, anticipating the maid *Xiu Gu*'s discovery of the illicit affair, the madam asks *Degui* to seduce and rape the virginal maid so that

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[70] Sommer Late Imperial China 80.
[71] C. T. Hsia and Susan Arnold Zonana, trans., "The Case of the Dead Infant," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations 126.
[72] Hsia, 126.

she will not reveal the madam's secret. Third, after giving birth to an illegitimate infant, *Shao Shi* mercilessly drowns her baby and asks *Degui* to bury the corpse.

The contrast between her prior goal of chastity and her present nightly profligacy illustrates how the constant conflict between her internal needs and desire to remain chaste increases in intensity until the former overwhelm the latter. After sleeping once with her servant, *Shao Shi* could choose to send him away, but instead, she allows their clandestine affair to continue. After *Shao Shi* becomes aware of her suppressed desires, she cannot control herself. She frees her conscience from the cell of morality and yields to her need for sexual gratification. A widow commonly thinks that since the ruining of her chaste reputation is a *fait accompli*, she might as well continue with her affair. As a result, *Shao Shi*'s sudden *laisser aller* leads to her subsequent pregnancy and her blackmailing by the lascivious and greedy *Zhi Zhu*, who uses her dead infant to blackmail her. As Sommer explains, "Pregnancy might expose the most clandestine liaisons, and fear of the consequences sometimes pushed pregnant widows to desperate extremes."[73] In this case, the once chaste widow *Shao Shi* murders her paramour, *Degui*, out of rage and then committs suicide.

In contrast to *Shao Shi*, who punishes herself, the ne'er-do-well neighbor *Zhi Zhu* receives his retribution through the "Net of Heaven." Although he does not directly defile the widow, his curiosity, lust and greed all prompt him to use *Degui* as his link to his object of desire, indirectly causing the deaths of both the widow and her servant.

Since the male servant dares not bring his benefactor (*Zhi Zhu*) to his employer-lover, *Zhi Zhu* decides to blackmail *Shao Shi* in order to achieve his goal of sleeping with her. By devising a plan for the male servant to sleep naked at night, *Zhi Zhu* creates the situation that later results in *Shao Shi*'s pregnancy. Later, he tries to benefit from this same pregnancy by using it to blackmail her.

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[73] Sommer Late Imperial China 112.

When *Degui* asks *Zhi Zhu* for a potion that will abort *Shao Shi*'s unborn chiled, he instead gives the servant medicine that will strengthen the widow's womb. When the infant dies after its birth, *Zhi Zhu* obtains the dead child and preserves it with lime for his subsequent blackmail. His demands for money, his insistence on having an affair with her, and his final excited demand for her submission cause the deaths of *Shao Shi* and her servant.

The mysterious crying of the preserved dead infant, which *Zhi Zhu* has disposed of in the river, is the trigger for his Heavenly retribution (*tianbao* 天報): Heaven's revenge (*baochou* 報仇) on behalf of *Shao Shi*. After Governor *Kuang*況太守 discovers the infant in the river and hears the testimony of the foreman *Bao Jiu* 包九and the maid *Xiu Gu*, *Zhi Zhu* can no longer hide the facts but must confess his wrongdoing. Only because of the Net of Heaven does the deceased widow obtain her revenge and her schemer receive his deserved fatal retribution.

Because *Shao Shi* vows to remain a chaste widow after her husband's death without considering her need for companionship and sexual fulfillment, when she sees her naked servant *Degui*, she does not hesitate to follow her desires. No significant struggle occurs between her presumed honor (*esi shixiao, shijie shida* 餓死事小，失節事大) and her sexual desires. Although she does not know that she has fallen into the trap of *Zhi Zhu* until he blackmails her, her initial disregard for her chastity, her violation of the respect that should exist between herself as mistress or employer and her servant *Degui*, her suggestion to *Degui* to defile her maid, and her drowning of her own illegitimate infant, end with her taking of her own life. Therefore, the reader has a degree of sympathy for *Shao Shi*. She is the victim of battle between her morality and desire, and to pay the price for submitting to the latter, she hangs herself to redeem her sin.

b) *WU SHI* 吳氏

After six years of marriage and three years of mourning, *Shao Shi* ignores the advice of her parents and her husband's relatives and chooses to be a chaste widow for the rest of her life. In contrast, *Wu Shi* has no need to make such a vow. Given that she has been a faithful wife for fifteen years and has her twelve- year-old son, *Liu Dasheng* 劉達生, as her priority, everyone naturally assumes that the widow-mother will continue to be chaste and fulfill her motherly role.

However, compared to the widow *Shao Shi*'s unexpected merciless behavior after beginning her illicit affair with her male servant, *Degui* 得貴, the widow *Wu Shi*'s actions are even more heartless after she meets with the handsome Taoist priest, *Huang Miaoxiu* 黃妙修, in the West Hill Monastery (*Xishan Guan* 西山觀) to discuss a seven-day service that will release her husband's soul from his recent death. Ironically, during the seven days of preparation for this meaningful event, the once chaste widow turns into a lewd *femme fatale* and a heartless mother. Due to the length of the present story, the analysis of *Wu Shi* as a *femme fatale* will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on how a "chaste widow" turns into a "profligate *femme fatale*," and the second part, which relates to the former, will deal with how she becomes of a "heartless mother" because of her lewdness.

The transformation from a "chaste widow" into a "profligate *femme fatale*"

As the narrator suggests, "Originally, *Wu Shi*'s sincere wish is to have a sacrifice for worshipping her deceased husband, without [any kind of] depraved thoughts in the beginning"
(元來吳氏請醮薦夫，本是一點誠心，原無邪意).[74] However, with the lack of an elder relative and male attendant in her household, the widow's desire to

[74] Ling, "*Xishan Guan shelu du wanghun Kaifeng Fu beiguan zhui huoming* 西山觀設籙度亡魂 開封府備棺追活命," 215.

honor her husband places her in a position in which she is vulnerable to temptation: in order to deal with family matters, she must leave her home and expose herself to the gaze of outsiders. Once again, a comparison with the widow *Shao Shi*'s situation is relevant. *Shao Shi* remains in her house and has a male servant to deal with outsider matters. Nevertheless, a clever schemer still manages to test her chastity three nights in a row and to create the conditions leading to her defilement in her own home. Therefore, when *Wu Shi*, whose sexual desires are as strong as those of *Shao Shi*, leaves her home and meets a handsome, elegant and lascivious Taoist priest, her misconduct is predictable.

When in the presence of the Taoist priest *Huang Miaoxiu* 黃妙修, *Wu Shi*, recently widowed and facing a lifetime of sexual abstinence, immediately becomes interested in the stranger after he volunteers to perform the service in her home. The priest initiates the illicit affair, but the sex-starved widow initiates the sexual escapades, takes him and his disciple *Taisu* 太素 as her sex slaves, and turns them into her victims.

With the flourishing of her lustful desires (春心正盛) due to her young widowhood, *Wu Shi* carries out her scheme to trap the priest, without realizing that he shares her desire to have an affair. First, she frequently visits the priest in order to make him aware of her interest in him. Second, she asks his younger disciple, *Taiqing* 太清, whom his master slept with the night before. Knowing this young lad will report back to his master, *Wu Shi* wants to convey that her recent widowhood does not mean that she is sexually unavailable. Third, by bringing the priest a pot of good tea to quench his thirst after he recites a poem giving a sexual meaning to "thirstiness," the widow implicitly consents to his sexual proposition. Following her three meaningful actions, the priest makes bold to suggest that he knows a black art that can summon her husband's soul to possess his (the priest's) body. Naturally, the clever widow discerns his intention and lets him have his way with her.

Although *Wu Shi*'s profligate nature results from her recent widowhood, her misconduct is still unforgiveable on three grounds. First, her husband has been dead for less than one hundred days, but the widow not only commits adultery during the service commemorating of his death, she also continues her clandestine affair for the next three years, when she is supposed to be in mourning for her husband. Second, when the priest begins to make love to her on her husband's soul bed in the mourning hall, the widow does not object to his advance, showing great disrespect towards her deceased husband. Third, in order to comply with the ceremony, the two libertines agree to lie to others the her husband's soul has revealed that they are cousins; thus, they can continue their clandestine affair without suspicion.

The conduct of *Wu Shi* before and after the death of her husband reveals that her licentious nature rather than the external sexual temptations causes her to submit to the priest during the first three days of the service. During her at least thirteen years of marriage (her only child, *Dasheng*, is twelve years old), *Wu Shi* did not violate any kind of moral codes after she married at the age of fifteen, perhaps because her husband satisfied her sexual needs before he died. Despite her sexual abstinence for almost three months after her husband's death, once the priest provides a sexual opportunity, the new widow wastes no time and makes love with a stranger on the third day of her husband's memorial service, and on her husband's soul bed. In addition, her illicit affair with the nineteen-year-old disciple, *Taisu*, provides further evidence that her *femme fatale*'s lewdness causes the deaths of both the priest and his disciple.

Aside from the narrator's early comment that there is no in-law or clansmen in the *Liu*'s family, implying no one will suggest or arrange a second marriage for the young widow, it is still not excusable for the sake of her sexual gratification, *Wu Shi* ruthlessly decides on murdering her own son *Dasheng*, an act which will

end her husband's patrilineal line. This issue will be unfolded in the following discussion.

The transformation from a "profligate *femme fatale*" into a "heartless mother"

When *Wu Shi*'s son, *Liu Dasheng*, reaches the age of sixteen and his schoolmates begin to mock him, he becomes aware of his widowed mother's immoral life. Out of respect for her, he covertly designs face-saving obstacles to ruin her nocturnal rendezvous with his so-called "uncle," the Taoist priest. On six occasions, *Dasheng* successfully inconveniences his mother and her paramour during their trysts. Ironically, his filial consideration for his licentious mother contributes to her decision to have him killed.

After the first two inconveniences caused by her son, *Wu Shi* totally ignores his intention to return her to a moral life; instead, she sees him as an obstacle to her enjoyment of wanton lust. When her lust blinds her conscience, the selfish and heartless mother tells the priest that she wants to end her son's life. Although her paramour asks her to reconsider her ruthless thoughts, the evil mother still clings to her cold-blooded decision. The final inconvenience that *Dasheng* causes convinces the heartless mother to carry out her plan to have her son killed with help from the priest.

The ruthless nature of this "devious" *femme fatale* reaches an apex when in the face of choosing between a future orgy with the priest and his two young disciples, and the death of her only son, the heartless mother immediately chooses the latter. After consenting to the priest's suggestion to falsely accuse *Dasheng* of being an unfilial son, she repeatedly insists in court that the Governor should order her only son to be beaten to death. Her statement "I only beg you to announce utterly sooner, so I can be free"

(只求老爺早早決絕，小婦人也得乾淨)[75] and "I am willing to live by myself, and don't want to have a son"
(小婦人情願自過日子，不情願有兒子了)[76] are just too evil for the Governor to believe that *Dasheng* actually committed any unfilial acts. Moreover, the Governor is also aware of the obvious contrast between the son's silence and the mother's heartless requests. The mother feels no remorse until the priest is beaten to death in court, and *Dasheng* pleads to the Governor to spare her a similar fate.

Dasheng saves his mother from being prosecuted, but *Wu Shi* still receives her retribution in due course. After she realizes that her paramour is dead and his disciples have been banished, *Wu Shi* gradually becomes mentally ill and dies.

The examples of *Shao Shi* and *Wu Shi* clearly illustrate the likelihood of widows having a clandestine affair. The external temptations, loneliness, and lust all combine to ensure that these two widows will break the code of chastity.

While both illicit affairs take place during and after the husband's memorial services, *Shao Shi*'s affair, begins when her neighbor *Zhi Zhu* glimpses her after he sneaks into her house to watch her burn incense during her service. Because the servant *Degui* refuses to lead *Zhi Zhu* to *Shao Shi*, the lecher instructs the simple-minded servant to sleep naked to seduce the chaste widow. During the three nights of temptations, *Shao Shi* demonstrates no trace of internal struggle. Instead, her loneliness and suppressed sexual desire take over her moral sense. Thereafter, the once chaste widow transforms herself into a merciless *femme fatale* who continues her illicit affair, instructs her lover to seduce her maid, drowns her illegitimate infant, and, finally, murders her servant-lover. Only with her own suicide does *Shao Shi* finally pay for her misdeeds.

On the other hand, the widow-mother *Wu Shi* does not need a scheme like

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[75] Ling, 230.
[76] Ling, 230.

Zhi Zhu's to stimulate her lust. Rather, her profligate nature itself is enough to cause her misconduct and her heartless decision to have her son killed. *Wu Shi* offers no resistance to the priest's advances and demands that he continues to have sex with her. Her selfish desire to have the priest and his two young disciples as her sex slaves triggers her decision to have her son killed. Although he forgives her and saves her from the Governor's punishment, *Wu Shi* still cannot escape from the Net of Heaven (*tianbao* 天報) after her lascivious behavior with her lover and cruel treatment of her son.

The clandestine affairs of the widows *Shao Shi* and *Wu Shi* both occur during and after the commemorative services for their deceased husbands. Of course, this kind of connection between religious matters and profligacy is not new. Consider the life of a woman during the *Ming* Dynasty. Throughout most of her life, from her maidenhood to her wifehood, a woman is expected to spend most of her time in her inner chamber. Forbidden to set foot outside her home and enduring her constant loneliness and monotonous daily pattern, she naturally longs for visitors. These conditions explain her rolling out the welcome mat for nuns (*nigu* 尼姑), one of the *Sangu liupo* 三姑六婆 (a bevy of strolling women). Ironically they are the most dangerous women to befriend.

The destructive powers of these "religious" devotees are exerted on *Wu Niangzi* (*Chuke paian jingqi* 6) and *Chen Yulan* (*Yushi mingyan* 4). The chaste wife *Wu Niangzi* falls helplessly into the hands of her victimizers after one of them, *Zhao* the nun, lures *Wu Niangzi* to a nunnery and serves her wine-cooked sponge cake. Similarly, the maiden *Chen Yulan* loses her virginity after a greedy nun, *Wang Shouchang*, is bribed to lure her to the nunnery where her male pursuer has his way with her.

Whereas the greed for money motivates *Zhao* and *Wang Shouchang* to participate in immoral schemes, lust (*se* 色) causes the nuns in other stories to break their lust vow (*yinse jie* 淫色戒). After the lechery and other misconduct of

these lustful nuns is discovered, they are punished by being banished or executed. Thus, these nuns serve dual roles as victimizers and victims. Thus, a discussion of the causes of their immoral behavior will help to explain its nature. The main issue here involves nature versus nurture.

ii. Nuns

For those who have decided to renounce the mundane world, or the so-called red dust (*hongchen* 紅塵), "*liugen qingjing*" 六根清靜 (the tranquillity of the six roots of sensation), which is the tranquillity of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, is one of the preliminary requirements for Buddhist nuns, who must purify their senses after choosing to lead a monastic life. The tranquillity of the six senses is important in Buddhism because in the face of temptations, a devotee can resist while continuing to practice her ascetic and monastic life without becoming impure in serving Buddha and the world.

Yet given human nature, maintaining this kind of tranquillity is not an easy task for anyone and requires a lifetime of self-discipline. The tranquillity of eye and mind is constantly being put to the test. Because great numbers of people come and go daily to and from the nunnery, the nuns need stern self-discipline to resist the temptation. In spite of the classic gesture of shaving one's head to serve as a reminder of the renunciation of sexual life, the sternness these devotees impose on themselves will sometimes conflict with their basic human desires when their strong wills are being tested.

Realistically, abstaining from anything involves relentlessly fighting a constant moral battle. Accordingly, it is understandable and forgivable for a devotee to break her vows, on the condition that she attempts to resist temptation and is remorseful afterwards. On the other hand, it is an unpardonable sin for a

devotee to not only make no attempt to resist sexual temptation, but also to scheme to find sexual partners among the worshippers who come to the nunnery.

The extreme examples of lustful devotees are the fake nuns (monks), who apply their self-cultivated technique of "internal alchemy" to transform themselves physically into nuns, so that they can cross freely into the inner chambers, a forbidden ground for males in general. Their "transformation" involves the shrinking of their external genitals. Hence, these individuals are capable of manipulating their genital organs so as to appear now male, now female."[77] A good example appears in *Wenren sheng yezhan Cuifu An Jingguan ni huajin Huangsha Long* 聞人生野戰翠浮庵 靜觀尼畫錦黃沙衚 Mr. *Wenren* [fights] an openly battle in *Cuifu* Nunnery *Jingguan* the nun flowery paints the *Huangsha Long* (*Chuke paian jingqi* 34).[78] A monk "who [has] treacherously manipulated his genitals to appear female to the world, but male to the girls he [lives] to debauch"[79] lives in a private nunnery and debauches female visitors in the hidden attic. After the discovery of nineteen white handkerchiefs stained with hymen's blood and a book of records of the women whom he has defiled during his stay, the "nun" is captured and brought to the court. By putting oil on his female-like genitals and bringing in a dog to lick the oil, the real genitals of the monk are revealed.

The following nuns are not as grossly extreme, but like the fake nuns, they disregard their moral teachings and turn their convent into a pleasure house for satisfying their own sexual needs. By violating their lust vows, the nuns destroy their lustful worshippers and themselves. Lewis S. Robinson suggests that Feng Menglong's "anticlerical depictions of a declining morality"[80] demonstrate that all

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[77] Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China," Late Imperial China 9.2 (1988): 2.
[78] Ling, "*Wenren sheng yezhan Cuifu An Jingguan ni huajin Huangsha Long* 聞人生野戰翠浮庵 靜觀尼畫錦黃沙衚," *Chuke Paian Jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 463-82.
[79] Furth Late Imperial China 22.
[80] Robinson Tamkang Review 344.

kinds of people can receive retributions. Like a huge fishing net, the "Net of Heaven" covers every level of society, regardless if one is of royalty or a devotee. While explaining his fanciful hypothesis about a general *xiaoshuo* ideology, Keith McMahon claims that "as a message, the *xiaoshuo* tells us that the orthodox way is never as interesting as what strays from that way; in other words, that the story is "interesting" because it shows how to "stray."[81] Accordingly, Feng wants to tell us that as a didactic message, the moral handbooks and precepts explaining the orthodox teachings are never so forceful as to show what will happen when the religionists stray; in other words, the inclusion of monks and nuns in his didactic stories is "forceful" because it shows that when monks and nuns stray, they also receive retributions.

In "The Mandarin-Duck Girdle"[82] (*He Daqing yihen yuanyang tao* 赫大卿遺恨鴛鴦絛),[83] the three devious nuns' atypical thoughts and actions and their consequences convey Feng's didactic message.

a) *KONGZHAO* 空照, *JINGZHEN* 靜眞 AND *LIAOYUAN* 了緣

Kongzhao and *Jingzhen*, along with *Liaoyuan*, are three young licentious nuns living in two separate nunneries, the *Feikong An* 非空庵 and *Jile An* 極樂庵, respectively. Despite their restricted residency, neither their shaved heads nor their Buddhist apparel can conceal their profligate nature. The accidental visit of the young married rake, *He Daqing* 赫大卿, turns the *Feikong An* into a sexual battlefield from the first day of his visit. While *Daqing* wants to capture as much *yin qi* 陰氣 as possible, each of his counterparts (*Kongzhao*, *Jingzhen*, and the former's two young maids) tries her best to obtain as much *yang*

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[81] McMahon, The Gap in the Wall: Containment and Abandon in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Fiction, diss., 3-4.
[82] Harold Acton and Lee Yi-hsieh, trans., "The Mandarin-Duck Girdle," Four Cautionary Tales (London: John Lehmann Ltd., 1947) 103-45.

qi 陽氣 (vital essences) as she can from this single male visitor. Following the death of *Daqing*, the wanton affair of the third nun, *Liaoyuan*, is revealed. Because of this story's complicated plot, the following discussion will begin with an analysis of *Kongzhao*, *Jingzhen* and *Liaoyuan*, and will conclude with the Net of Heaven (*tianwang* 天網).

Kongzhao and *Jingzhen* reside separately in the East Wing (*dongyuan* 東院) and the West Wing (*xiyuan* 西院) of the *Feikong An*. The younger *Kongzhao* launches the sexual battle leading to the eventual defeat of all three nuns.

The hyperactive sexual desire of *Kongzhao*, the youngest among the three, is revealed as soon as she catches a glimpse of her handsome and lascivious visitor, *He Daqing*, after he walks into the East Wing. *Kongzhao*'s abandonment of her propriety when receiving her guest, her invitation to her inner quarter for tea, her refilling of his teapot upon his request to prolong his stay, and finally, her consent for him to look at the gauze curtains in her bedroom lead *Kongzhao* and *Daqing* to quench each other's sexual thirst. *Kongzhao*'s sexcapade continues when she includes her two young maids into the game. In order to curry favor with *Daqing* to prolong his stay for her own sexual fulfillment, the young nun not only shamelessly includes two other observers to change their one-on-one illicit sexual affair into a reckless sexual congress, she further invites *Jingzhen*, the elder nun of the West Wing, to participate after the latter learns of the affair. Sharing her sex-slave with *Jingzhen* serves *Kongzhao*'s two purposes of currying favor and pacifying her jealousy.

Kongzhao's licentious nature, however, is absolutely no match for *Jingzhen*'s. *Jingzhen* is a genuine nymphomaniac. In the face of any kind of obstacle blocking her pursuit of sexual gratification, *Jingzhen* acts shrewdly without delay. Her way of handling *Daqing*'s request to leave and his eventual

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[83] Feng, "*He Daqing weihen yuanyang tao* 赫大卿遺恨鴛鴦絛." *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 206-27.

death are good examples to illustrate her shrewish nature.

After staying for two months in the nunnery, *Daqing* realizes that his long and frequent daily sexual chores are destroying his health. Thinking of his family's worry because of his absence of over two months, he requests that he be allowed to depart and promises to return after four to five days. Yet to prevent his leaving, the shrewish *Jingzhen* makes him drunk, then shaves off all his hair and dresses him as a nun, so that he is forced to prolong his stay until his hair grows back. As well as suffering from his deteriorated health, he has to continue to fight his sexual battle with two nuns and the additional two young maids. *Daqing*'s final request for the delivery of his mandarin-duck girdle to his wife so as to meet with her before his death serves as another example to demonstrate *Jingzhen*'s shrewishness. Being an egoist, *Jingzhen* is concerned with only two things when dealing with her sex-slave: her own sexual gratification and the possible exposure of their misdeeds. Bearing her second concern in mind, *Jingzhen* throws the girdle to the ceiling after *Kongzhao* mentions *Daqing*'s request. Finally, her malicious nature is also revealed after *Daqing* dies. Instead of sending his corpse back to his family for a proper burial, *Jingzhen* dresses him like a nun and puts him in their old nun's coffin. Then the nuns, without considering whether the day is auspicious for a burial, remove the coffin to the back garden, pour lime over it, and then bury it in an empty plot.

Ironically, *Jingzhen*'s same shrewishness eventually causes her own and *Kongzhao*'s deaths. When they are wrongfully accused of murdering the monk *Qufei* 去非, who is involved with the equally lascivious nun *Liaoyuan* from *Jile An*, *Jingzhen* and *Kongzhao* must reveal the corpse they buried was that of *He Daqing* and not *Qufei* from *Wanfa Si* 萬法寺.

As for *Liaoyuan*, she dresses *Qufei* as a nun so that he can stay in her nunnery. *Liaoyuan*'s egocentric attitude shows no concern for the trouble she has caused in the dispute between *Qufei*'s parents and his master, the old monk

Jueyuan. After *Kongzhao* and *Jingzhen* reveal whom they actually buried, and *Jingzhen* is arrested, she still instructs *Qufei* to lie that he/she is the new disciple in her nunnery. *Jingzhen*'s purpose in protecting the monk is obvious: she wants to be discharged from the wrongful accusation of murdering *Qufei* and to continue their life as husband and wife. However, a *deus ex machina* ensures that *Kongzhao*, *Jingzhen*, and *Liaoyuan* all receive their justified retributions.

b) The Net of Heaven

As the old saying goes, "The Net of Heaven stretches everywhere, its mesh is loose, but nothing escapes it" (*tianwang huihui shu'er bulou* 天網恢恢 疏而不漏). Thus, although *Kongzhao* and *Jingzhen* effectively dispose of *He Daqing*'s corpse, and *Liaoyuan* successfully disguises *Qufei* as an nun, the reappearance of the mandarin-duck girdle leads to the redressing of two grievances.

The first grievance is the death of *He Daqing*. With his wife sees her missing husband's mandarin-duck girdle on the workman *Kuai San* 蒯三, she questions him. He explains that he accidentally overheard two young silly maids in the *Feikong An* imitating the act of copulating, and *Jingzhen*'s maid confessing her role in *He Daqing*'s death. After receiving this information, the wife, *Lu Shi* 陸氏, leads a party of excavators to dig up her husband's coffin at the *Feikong An*. She initially does not recognize her feminized husband and decides to return to court. However, a greedy workman, *Mao Popi* 毛潑皮, intentionally lags behind, hoping to find something of value inside the coffin. He discovers that the corpse is actually that of a man. Then *Kongzhao* and *Jingzhen* are charged with the murder of *Qufei* and must reveal the identity of the corpse they buried. For retribution, both *Kongzhao* and *Jingzhen* are ordered to be beheaded, and the two maids of the East Wing are degraded and sold as public prostitutes after receiving eighty lashes.

The maid from the West Wing is returned to secular life, the two porters receive the bastinado, and finally, the *Feikong An* will be demolished and all its property confiscated.

The second grievance is the murder charge against the old monk *Jueyuan* 覺圓 by the parents of his disciples *Qufei*. Because their son vanishes for three months, *Qufei*'s parents continue in court to accuse the old monk of murder. Although *He Daqing*'s murder case is closed, and *Liaoyuan* walks freely out of the court with her *Qufei* in spite of the minor charge against her for sheltering the culprits, *Qufei*'s enduring filial piety results in *Liaoyuan*'s retribution. When *Qufei* sees his father being pummelled by other disciples after he has rained blows on the old monk's head, the disguised nun cannot hold himself and rushes to intervene; his rescue of his father reveals *Liaoyuan*'s entire scheme. As retribution, *Liaoyuan* is sold as a harlot after receiving forty lashes, her convent is demolished, and *Qufei* is banished after receiving an equal lashing.

Because of *Kongzhao*'s lust and *Jingzhen*'s shrewishness, *He Daqing* is destined to meet his doom once he steps into the *Feikong An*. While *Daqing* thinks he is lucky to intrude into the region of the gentle (*Wenrou Xiang* 溫柔鄉) and uses all his skill and vigor in delighting his new acquaintances, ironically he cannot foresee that he will become their sex slave. By losing much of his vital essences whose conservation is essential to both potency and longevity.[84] *He Daqing* finally loss the sex battle between himself and the nuns. His failure to meet with his wife before his death, his loss of life after his three-month stay in the nunnery, and his subsequent disrespectful burial and the disturbance of his corpse before the proper burial by his wife are all unforeseeable retributions.

The youngest nun, *Kongzhao*, is more deserving of sympathy, even though she is the initiator of the disastrous sexcapade. At the age of seven, *Kongzhao* was sent into the nunnery for nurture after the death of her father. At her present

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[84] Furth, Late Imperial China 5.

nineteen years of age, in spite of her living twelve years of abstinence, she has experienced the usual emotional and sexual transformations of puberty. Her life of rigid seclusion does not allow her any outlet for her resentment toward the solitude and celibacy that have been imposed on her. When she glimpses of the handsome *Daqing*, she does not hesitate to come out to receive him and allows her love to bloom without delay. Therefore, the answer to the earlier question as to whether nature or nurture causes a nun's immoral misconduct is that it is the latter in the case of *Kongzhao*.

The analyses of the devious nature of the two new subtypes of *femmes fatales*, the widows and the nuns, reveals that their dwellings are irrelevant to their opportunities for sexual gratification. Thus, widows, who remain secluded within their homes in order to minimize their exposure to outsiders, and nuns, who live in nunneries with an open-door policy to visitors, are equally likely to be exposed to sexual temptation. Whether a lustful admirer lures a chaste widow like *Shao Shi* away from her home in order to test her chastity, or a widow-mother like *Wu Shi* uses her cunning to lure a man into her home in order to seduce him, widows are exposed to unavoidable sexual temptations. Similarly, living in a nunnery with an open-door policy does not enable nuns to resist their constant temptations. Therefore, the widows and nuns yield to temptation mainly because of loneliness and sexual instinct,[85] respectively.

iii. Wife

Unlike some of the widows and nuns, a wife who is a deviational type of *femme fatale* is not presented sympathetically, for a wife has her husband as her emotional and sexual companion. Thus, her own profligacy is her only reason for

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[85] A psychoanalytic term referring to the tendency toward pleasure-seeking that prompts the mature organism to seek sexual union with a member of the opposite sex. See J. P. Chaplin, Dictionary of Psychology (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1985) 422.

her determined decision, in spite of everything, to cuckold her husband.

In a marital relationship, chastity is expected of a husband and his wife. Although this expectation implies an equality of duty, it is the woman who bears the greater responsibility for maintaining an harmonious marriage. Faithfulness is stressed as the crucial element of chastity, so "wifely devotion and a widow's fidelity" are two required moral duties of a virtuous wife. However, the monotonous life of the wives, who must remain in their inner chambers, is so dull that, according to R. H. van Gulik, "their sexual life is much more important to them than to their master, who has manifold interests in his life outside, such as his work, his relations with his friends, etc."[86]

Regardless of Van Gulik's observation, a wife's adultery is, nonetheless, an unredeemable sin in *Sanyan Erpai*. Unlike the charming dispositional type of wives who deserve our pity, the uncontrollable deviational type of wife receives only our contempt. For her own sexual satisfaction, the deviational wife actively schemes to reinforce her paramour's participation in the adulterous affair.

The example of the shrewish wife *Liang Shengjin* 梁聖金 reveals how a wife's lust can completely destroy her family.

a) *LIANG SHENGJIN* 梁聖金

Shengjin's licentious disposition has been evident since her maidenhood. Instead of putting the most important decision of her life in her parents' hands, she cannot bear to wait and indulges in a clandestine affair with her equally licentious neighbor, *Zhou De* 周得, who chooses to live an unmarried life. With her short-sighted vision of life, as well as indifference about her future potential good marriage and her future responsibility to care of her aging parents, *Shengjin* pays heed only to her own immediate carnal pleasures. When pursuing pleasure

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[86] R. H. van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961) 270.

becomes her only goal, *Shengjin* is naturally prone to commit an adultery after she is married. Her misconduct causes the deaths of herself and her paramour, and the unnecessary extermination of her own family by her cuckolded husband, *Ren Gui* 任珪, after her adultery is exposed.

The process leading to the eventual extermination occurs in three phases, beginning with the suspicion of *Shengjin*'s blind father-in-law, *Ren Gong* 任公. The frequent upstairs visits paid by *Shengjin*'s so-called "relative" make her forget to prepare her father-in-law's lunch, stimulating his interest in her possible misbehavior. When *Ren Gui* informs his wife about his father's suspicions, she pretends to be astonished while sobbing, a typical response of a wrongly accused woman. "Weeping, causing a scene, and threatening to hang herself" (*yi ku, er nao, san shangdiao* 一哭，二鬧，三上吊), the shrewish wife not only successfully makes her husband disbelieve the accusation, in revenge she also destroys the affectionate relationship between *Ren Gui* and his father during the story's second phase.

Because of her father-in-law's accusation, *Shengjin* decides that her returning to her parents' home is the only way she can continue to indulge her wanton lust. Following the suggestion of *Zhou De*, her lover, she puts a cat under her blouse and tells her husband that the cat's scratch marks were made by his father when he attempted to rape her.

The return of *Shengjin* back home is the turning point for herself, *Ren Gui*, and many others. During this last phase, the *femme fatale* unwittingly reveals her lustful side and is forced to pay for her crimes of betrayal and the disruption of her husband's relationship with his father. At one point, the situation becomes so confused that *Shengjin*, her parents, and the maid actually beat the husband with sticks, with the parents and the maid realizing that they are actually helping *Shengjin*'s lover to escape detection by the husband. Of course, the deeper the deception, the greater the husband's rage is when mocking gossipers tell him about

his wife's misconduct. *Ren Gui* becomes so thoroughly incensed that he fails to consider any alternative punishment than that of death, resulting in the murder of his wife, *Shengjin*, her paramour, her parents and the maid, who are all involved in the adulterous relationship.

The previous discussion demonstrates that widows, nuns, and wives can all be active, aggressive pursuers of equally lecherous men. Corresponding to the saying "When a woman wants to steal a man, there is only a sheet of paper in between" (*nuzi toulang gezhong zhi* 女子偷郎隔重紙), once the woman shows her interest, she can have her desired man without any obstacle in her way. However, what if the man refuses to be stolen? This is the case for the maiden *Xiuxiu* 秀秀.

iv. Maiden

The maiden of the deviational type is an aggressive participant in her own destiny. Unlike the passive, beautiful daughter of the dispositional type (*Wang Jiaolun*), who waits for her pursuer (*Zhou Tingzhang*) to begin his actions, or the mildly ambitious daughter of the situational type (*Chen Yulan*), who initiate her affair with her lover, (*Ruan Sanlang*), and then waits for him to respond, *Xiuxiu* is like the director of her own play: in order to satisfy her desires, she makes her own plans and then carries them out. Most important, the threatens her man when he is unwilling to do what she wants. This devious maiden is so infatuated and obsessed with sticking to her "scripts" that she is willing to pay any price to achieve her goal, which is that the man will desire and love her the way she wants him to. If her unfortunate victim decides to quit her play, the maiden will seek revenge and disregard her own welfare.

a) *XIUXIU* 秀秀

Xiuxiu 秀秀, like other maidens whose love buds are blooming during puberty, is searching for love. She works as an embroidery maidservant in the house of the Prince of *Xianan* 咸安, who arranges that she will marry the jade carver *Cui Ning* 崔寧 when her term is finished. Despite this arrangement and his display of love, the aggressive *Xiuxiu* cannot bear to wait to obtain her desired man. Rather than using her charm, *Xiuxiu* instead tries to force *Cui Ning* into submission. The fire in the prince's house symbolizes the extent of the *femme fatale*'s infatuation with the jade carver. That is, the more intense her obsession, the greater is her power of destruction. The *femme fatale*'s unabashed determination and aggressiveness force *Cui Ning* to take her away from the burning house. They have sex immediately afterwards, and she suggests they become "husband and wife." *Xiuxiu* gets her way only by threatening to ruin *Cui Ning*'s reputation. Eventually, her obsession with the jade carver contributes to the suicide of her parents after they hear of her death and its consequences.

Xiuxiu's death does not cease her obsession for *Cui Ning*. Aiming to stay with him during her future life, her ghost appears to him, concealing the fact that the prince had her beaten to death because she broke her contract. When Private *Guo* 郭排軍 reveals whom she really is, *Xiuxiu* decides that she can stay no more in the human world and, also that she cannot bear to part from her beloved *Cui Ning*. Without giving him a choice, she pulls his soul with her into the netherworld.

Cui Ning is unlike the desperate lechers of the previous tales, for he is passive and submissive throughout his affair with *Xiuxiu*. He decides to flee with her because he wants to protect his reputation, as the *femme fatale* has threatened to ruin him if he rejects her. In fact, his desire for *Xiuxiu* is ambivalent or even only minimal. For example, when *Xiuxiu* and *Cui Ning* are captured, he wishes only to be free from blame. Thus, he claims that *Xiuxiu* put his hands on her breasts and threatened to ruin his name if he did not accept her, and that she

demanded their elopement. Nevertheless, he cannot escape being beaten and banished by the prince. These punishments make *Cui Ning* determined to avoid to further contact with the *femme fatale*. When *Xiuxiu*'s ghost calls to him, *Cui Ning* ignores her, wanting no further trouble. Paradoxically, *Cui Ning* still allows *Xiuxiu* to follow him, and they live together with her parents. However, in the final episode, following the revelation that *Xiuxiu* and her parents are ghosts, *Xiuxiu* strangles her beloved and pulls him into the netherworld.

Hence, the *femme fatale* of this story plays a dual role: that of victimizer and victim. *Cui Ning*, however, functions as a passive victim; he does not do anything wrong to deserve any kind of penalty. From the beginning, *Cui Ning* is completely unsuspecting of his eventual fate. The contrast between his submissiveness and *Xiuxiu*'s dominance portrays the *femme fatale* as both a victimizer and victim. *Xiuxiu* suffers far more than that of her intended prey, *Cui Ning*, both physically and emotionally (She is unable or unwilling to detach herself from him even after her death.) Thus, *Xiuxiu* represents a third and unique form of the *femme fatale*. In the end, *Xiuxiu*'s infatuation with *Cui Ning* is so potent that she must strangle and pull him with her into the eternal netherworld. Although one may consider this act selfish, it is *Xiuxiu*'s only way to offer her love. Nevertheless, her destruction is the worst form, as this self-centered *femme fatale* is consumed by her need to have her own way with her victim.

The fifteen stories that have been analyzed portray a total of seventeen *femmes fatales*. All these stories demonstrate the destructive power of female beauty: *meise zonglai you shaji* 美色從來有殺機 [Female beauty always had the opportunity to kill]. While this is an overt misogynist statement, Feng Menglong and Ling Mengchu use the beauties as dangerous temptations to convey a didactic

message to men. That is, their destruction is when they allow their sexual desires to take control over their consciences. Feng and Ling are also not lenient towards women. The infliction of retributions on these *femme fatale* emphasizes that like their male lovers, they are morally responsible for their actions. In fact, the retributions received by the *femmes fatales*, are always in proportion to their morality.

The dispositional type of *femme fatale*, who attracts men with an aura of charm, usually receives a good retribution (*haobao* 好報). A few clear examples will illustrate this point.

We begin with the two courtesans *Yutangchun* and *Zhao Chuner*. Even when their lovers run out of money and fall into dire straits, these courtesans never abandon them, in contrast to their greedy sisters who live by their golden rule of "sending away the old and welcoming the new"(*songjiu yingxin* 送舊迎新). Their persistence in helping their lovers return to society, reconcile with their fathers, and achieve success as officials all contribute to their eventual good retributions. *Yutangchun* is rewarded with her release from a wrongfully accused murder crime; her becoming the wife of her lover; her respect from his first wife, *Liu Shi*; and, finally, her being blessed with sons. As for *Zhao Chuner*, she finally moves up the social ladder as her upper-class lover's wife.

Therefore, although their own aura of charm attracts their pursuers, if *Yutangchun* and *Zhao Chuner* do not act morally, good retributions will not befall them.

The situational type of *femme fatale*, who lures men into dangerous or compromising situations, usually receiving ambivalent or fatal retributions. For instance, because the prostitute *Jinnu* has to find a client necessary to support herself and her family, she wastes no time in trapping her wealthy landlord by pulling out his hairpin and asking him to follow her upstairs. However, her

success is only temporary, as her lover's sickness and his subsequent dream eventually end their relationship. Although the narrator attempts to minimize *Jinnu*'s guilt by inserting a dream that seems to justify her lover's death, her misconduct still brings her a bad retribution (*baoying* 報應): her need to constantly relocate and search for a provider.

Before we move on to the deviational type, two observations deserve our attention. The first involve the lack of good retribution received by courtesans of the deviational type. The second involves the use of dreams to excuse the behavior of the situational type of *femme fatale*.

Generally speaking, courtesanship is considered as a morally degraded occupation. However, the two deviational courtesans *Yutangchun* and *Zhao Chuner*, along with the situational *Jinnu*, receive good retributions and ambivalent retribution, respectively. Feng Menglong's sympathy for three *femmes fatales* may possibly be explained by his own personal experience. According to his bibliographies, he once had a marriage vow with a renowned courtesan named *Hou Huiqing* 侯慧卿. When she abandoned him, Feng from then on stopped visiting brothels, so despite her betrayal, Feng still had some positive feelings for the courtesan. Thus, in his stories, the former two courtesans receive praise, and the latter one receives no apparent punishment, but instead is provided with a dream that excuses her misconduct.

The dreams in these stories have two functions. First, they minimize the *femmes fatale*'s blame and second, they show that retribution can be administered not only in the present life but also in the next, as occurs in the cases of *Jinnu* and *Chen Yulan*. *Jinnu* sets a trap to catch her lover, *Wu Shan*, but because of Feng's personal sympathy towards prostitutes, the story excuses her behavior. From the dream in which a monk comes to claim the life of *Wu Shan*, we know that because a monk who died due to his breaking his vow of lust explains that he is looking for

a substitute, *Wu Shan*'s potential death cannot completely be blamed on *Jinnu*. As for the maiden *Chen Yulan*, despite her initiation of her clandestine affair, her dream of her deceased lover *Ruan Sanlang*, who describes his betrayal of her in their previous life, illustrates that he is destined to die at her hand in the present life. In addition to *Yulan*'s subsequent redemption of her faults by raising *Sanlang*'s son and remaining a chaste widow, she receives praise and a memorial arch.

Finally, the deviational type of *femme fatale*, who falls into her own desires, always receives a bad retribution (*baoying* 報應 or *ebao* 惡報). A clear example is *Wu Shi*, the devious widow-mother. Her profligacy in consenting to the sexual proposition by the Taoist priest *Huang Miaoxiu*, regardless of her need to respect her newly deceased husband, and her subsequent heartless scheme to eliminate her only son and her husband's only patrilineal heir, *Liu Dasheng*, in order to continue her tryst with the priest and his disciple, constitute conduct deserving the worst possible retribution. Despite *Dasheng*'s forgiveness and his pleading for the dismissal of the charges against her, the devious widow-mother *Wu Shi* still cannot escape from the Net of Heaven (*tianwang* 天網) and her retribution of death.

Hence, by categorizing *femmes fatales* into three types, the *femme fatale* as an icon of disaster can be viewed as a complex female archetype. The kinds of retributions *femmes fatales* receive are in proportion to the category where they belong and to the degree their thoughts and actions deviate from the norm. Retributions for the three types of *femmes fatales* range from good, to ambivalent, to fatal, illustrating the saying "The net of Heaven is cast wide,/ Though the mesh is not fine, yet nothing ever slips through."

Chapter Three

Synopses of the Stories in Chapter Two

The Dispositional Type: *Femme Fatales* who "use their charm to attract men"

Yutangchun 玉堂春 in *Yutangchun luonan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫 (*Yutangchun* Meets with her Husband in Distress)

The sensible *Yutangchun* 玉堂春 differs from her fellow courtesans, whose ultimate goal is spending their earnings extravagantly on themselves. They believe that the money will roll in day after day. The protagonist, *Yutangchun*, however, realizes that since beauty fades, she must plan for the future by saving her money and searching for a desirable man who will marry her and remove her from bondage.

Originally from a wealthy family, *Yutangchun* is sold to her procuress and her husband for eight hundreds *taels* by her well-known father, *Zhou Yanheng* 周彥亨 during a time of famine. Because of her family background, *Yutangchun* has a conscientiousness and good will not normally found in her degraded profession. After *Yutangchun* meets *Wang Jinglong* 王景隆, her good nature is revealed during their times of hardship.

Beginning with their first encounter, *Wang Jinglong*, a seventeen-year-old scholar, begins to show his fondness for the beautiful *Yutangchun* by the lavish spending of his father's money. As he is still immature at this age, when the procuress mentions that a client wishes to spend one hundred *taels* in order to be *Yutangchun*'s first bedmate, *Jinglong* begins to brag about his family's wealth and fame, boasting that he can outbid any potential client. After *Yutangchun* comes out to receive him, without knowing that the money his butler, *Wang Ding* 王定, collected belongs to his father, *Wang Qiong* 王瓊, the unconscionable son

Jinglong wastes no time and immediately asks *Wang Ding* to go home for him. He then brings over two hundred *taels*, four bolts of cloth and twenty *taels* of crushed silver, so as to please *Yutangchun*. *Jinglong* gives all of these to the lady as a gift during their first encounter. *Jinglong* also spends freely on his new-found love's two maids. After requesting that his father's trunk of money be moved to *Yutangchun*'s bedchamber, *Jinglong* shows further extravagance by purchasing the favor of the old procuress. He pays off all of the women's debts and additionally builds a Hundred Flowers Tower (*Baihua Lou* 百花樓) as a love-chamber for himself and *Yutangchun*.

Although she is the reason for *Wang Jinglong*'s lavishness, *Yutangchun* is still able to realize that he is acting excessively, despite the fact that she initially comes out of her bedchamber after her procuress tells her of *Jinglong*'s wealth. After learning from *Wang Ding* that the money *Jinglong* is spending on her is his father's, the conscientious courtesan pleads with him:

"People do not have a thousand good days, and flowers can have only a few days in red! One day, when you have no money, they [the procuress and her husband] will turn their back and not recognize you." 人無千日好，花有幾日紅！你一日無錢，他番了臉來，就不認得你。[1]

As *Yutangchun* has predicted, after *Jinglong* consumes the entire trunk of money, her adoptive parents, *Su Huai* 蘇淮 and *Yichengjin* 一秤金, begin to treat him offensively. The hardship that *Yutangchun* experiences from this point onward further demonstrates her devotion and loyalty for her lover.

She first demonstrates these qualities when the procuress unsuccessfully asks *Yutangchun* to send *Jinglong* away. A courtesan would normally send her poor lover away after he runs out of money, but *Yutangchun* instead rebukes her

procuress by saying,

"People such as you all really have no principles of Heaven. Master *Wang*'s thirty thousand *taels* of silver were completely sent to our home. If not because of him, we would still owe debts everywhere, and how would we have enough money to live on?"
你們這等没天理，王公子三萬兩銀子，俱送在我家。若不是他時，我家東也欠債，西也欠債，焉有今日這等足用?[2]

Because of her non-compliance, the beautiful *Yutangchun* is punished by a severe lashing. Realizing that *Jinglong* has no place to go, *Yutangchun* bears the pain and asks him to reside with her.

The second instance illustrating her devotion to him occurs after *Wang Jinglong* is tricked by her procuress and robbed. Once *Jinglong* squanders an entire thirty thousands *taels* on *Yutangchun* and her procuress' household, *Yichengjin* and her husband attempt to disgrace the scholar, hoping that he will go away by himself. His meek character and *Yutangchun*'s resistance leave the procuress with no other way of removing him but to invent a plan to discard her poor client. By pretending that the entire household will attend a relative's birthday, *Yichengjin* asks the scholar to return home to lock the doors. Once he leaves the group, they immediately speed up their pace and leave him behind. As a result, he has nowhere to turn to. After *Jinglong* is deceived, he stays temporarily with the silversmith *Wang* 王. One day he re-encounters the peddler *Jin Ge* 金哥. *Jin Ge*'s delivery of *Jinglong*'s message finally grants him another chance to see *Yutangchun*. Their meeting provides her with the opportunity to help *Jinglong* return home and reconcile with his father.

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[1] Feng Menglong, "*Yutangchun luonan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Comprehensive words to admonish the world) (Taibei: Wehhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 274.
[2] Feng 275.

Yutangchun understands the importance of study and status in a man's life. She realizes that only by rebuilding his bond with his father and attaining success in his studies can *Wang Jinglong* be re-accepted into society. Because of the hardships that he is enduring (he becomes a beggar before *Yutangchun* rescues him), *Yutangchun* decides to help him by giving him two hundreds *taels* and asks him to dress up and revisit her procuress. He then deceives the procuress by stating that he is bringing along fifty thousands *taels* (actually stones in a trunk), a few ships of goods, and numerous servants from *Nanjing* 南京. As a result, the procuress invites him to stay for the night. Following her plan, *Yutangchun* asks *Jinglong* to take away all of the expensive things from her bedroom and bring them with him for the reconciliation with his father. During his stay, the scrupulous *Yutangchun* says to him,

"You spent thirty thousands *taels* here, and now you are going home with empty hands. I am going to give you my money, jewelers and vessels, so you can have something to take back."
你敗了三萬兩銀子，空手而回，我將金銀首飾器皿，都與你拿去罷。[3]

With the help of the courtesan's scheme, *Jinglong* successfully returns home to continue his studies. *Yutangchun* further persuades her lover not to visit any pleasure quarters in the future.

Next morning, after discovering that both *Jinglong* and the family's possessions are missing, the procuress chases after *Yutangchun* in order to beat her. However, the clever courtesan runs out onto the street and accuses her procuress of murdering *Jinglong*. In order to fulfill her promise of faithfulness to *Jinglong*, *Yutangchun* demands in public that *Yichengjin* and her husband write her

[3] Feng 282.

a document freeing her from her bondage and stating that the twenty thousands *taels* which *Wang Jinglong* squandered in their household are for her ransom. To pacify the onlookers, the greedy parents have no alternative but to consent to her request.

After two years of study, the scholar finally attains the post of an official. Longing for *Yutangchun*, he is finally able to work in *Shanxi* 山西, where *Yutangchun* is taken after she is secretly sold by her procuress and her husband to the merchant *Shen Hong* 沈洪. Like *Yutangchun*, who helped him to reconcile with his father, *Wang Jinglong* applies his wisdom and with the help of the official *Liu* 劉, clears *Yutangchun* of the charge of murder. In the end, the true murderers are captured. They turn out to be *Shen Hong*'s wife, *Pi Shi* 皮氏, and her lover, *Zhao Ang* 趙昂.

Following *Yutangchun*'s release from the court, the official *Liu* plans to return her to her hometown to marry her off. Instead, *Wang Jinglong* requests that she be sent to live with the silver craftsman *Wang* 王銀匠 in *Beijing* 北京. One year later, after his term has finished and he is transfered back to *Beijing*, *Wang Jinglong* goes to see *Yutangchun* and brings her back to his family. Although *Wang Jinglong*'s father has already arranged that his son should marry the daughter of *Liu* as his principal wife, the mutual respect between *Yutangchun* and *Liu Shi* 劉氏 leads the famous courtesan to be content with her final destination: reunion with her lover, *Jinglong*, as his concubine, who is blessed with the birth of sons.

Zhao Chuner 趙春兒 **in** ***Zhao Chuner zhongwang Cao jiazhuang*** 趙春兒重旺曹家莊 **(*Zhao Chuner* Restores the House of *Cao*)**

Zhao Chuner 趙春兒 is a renowned courtesan who exclusively receives

men of wealth and high standing. With substantial accumulated savings, *Chuner* has a long-standing desire to retire from her profession and meet the man of her dreams. Her relationship with the wastrel *Cao Kecheng* 曹可成 initially appears to be promising. However, once *Kecheng*'s father passes away, his son's complete incompetence suddenly comes to light.

The only son of the *Cao* family, *Kecheng* fails to carry out his responsibilities as a filial son and an able man in society. In addition to his lack of interest in education and his inability to manage the household, *Kecheng* further disgraces himself by spending lavish amounts of money in houses of pleasure. His need to satisfy his lust not only leads him to mortgage his family's property, but also further tempts him to steal from his father's hidden ingots, replacing them with counterfeits, in order to buy back the freedom of his beloved courtesan, *Zhao Chuner*.

The death of the old man *Cao* becomes a turning point for both *Chuner* and *Kecheng*. It is also the beginning of a rare and unexpected revelation, a display of unanticipated virtue from a courtesan, this being in stark contrast to *Kecheng*'s lack of filial responsibility.

Realizing the dire straits of her lover, the conscientious and faithful *Chuner* gives him numerous gifts from her own savings. She provides him with a hundred *taels* of white gold, but rather then using these constructively, the pathetic *Kecheng* instead spends all of the money on a feast for his friends. *Zhao Chuner*, therefore, kindly advises him,

"This group of idlers does only harm but do no good. In the beginning, your family was also ruined by this group of people. From now on, don't go near them, I encourage you to go home, this is my good intention."
這班閒漢，有損無益。當初你一家人家，都是這班人壞了。如今

再不可近他了，我勸你回去是好話。[4]

After *Kecheng*'s return home, *Chuner* occasionally sends someone to provide for his daily necessities. Even after the mourning period for the old man *Cao*, *Chuner* still prepares the sacrificial offerings to pay respect to *Cao*'s grave. She even gives three strings of money to *Kecheng* so that he can prepare a ceremony for his deceased father. When *Kecheng* wishes to purchase a house for their love quarters, *Chuner* again pays for the house in full, using her own savings. Following their marriage, the managerial *Chuner* suggests that the best way for them to earn a living is by plowing the land:

"You were born and grew up in a wealthy family, but don't know the management of business. It is better for you to redeem a few *mu* of land for farming, which is the practical thing to do."
你生長富室，不會經營生理，還是贖幾畝田地耕種，這是務實的事。[5]

However, when the hapless husband insists on pursuing a business career, the devoted wife gives him three hundreds *taels*, all of which are cheated away by his abusive friends. Rather than show appreciation for her generosity, *Kecheng* selfishly demands that *Chuner* hand over all of her savings to him. Although the frugal *Chuner* has saved all of her money for an emergency, the short-sighted *Kecheng* is able to consider only his present desire for enjoyment and does not care if he depletes her entire life savings. *Chuner* tells him,

"These things, anyway all yours, now I hand them all to you. From now on, *Cuiye* and I will weave to earn our living. I don't want you to support me anymore, so

[4] Feng, "*Zhao Chuner zhongwang Cao jiazhuang* 趙春兒重旺曹家莊," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 379.
[5] Feng 380-1.

don't you ever come to bother me."
這些東西，左右是你的，如今都交與你，省得欠掛。我今後自和翠葉纺績度日，我也不要你養活，你也莫纏我。[6]

As a result of his lack of consideration, the frugal *Chuner*, with the help of her maid, *Cuiye* 翠葉, weaves to earn a living. Even when *Kecheng* sells her weaving maid after he spends all of the money, the protagonist's soft-hearted nature and devotion lead her to once again forgive *Kecheng*'s irresponsible actions and suggest that he become a teacher:

"You once studied and are literate. There is no teacher around the village. Since the grave hall is empty, why not gather a few village children and teach them? Receiving some school fees will come in handy."
你也曾讀書識字，這裏村前村後少個訓蒙先生，墳堂屋裏又空着，何不聚集幾個村童教學，得些學俸，好盤用。[7]

After observing the success of his classmate *Yin Sheng* 殷盛 , *Kecheng* suggests that he should become an official. *Chuner*'s response once again illustrates her virtue. *Chuner* asks *Kecheng* to dig up the ground, revealing the official hat and the thousand *taels* of money which she has saved from fifteen years of weaving. This money and her hidden savings from prostitution enable *Kecheng* to acquire an official title. With this new stipend, he eventually buys back all his family's property. In the meantime, because of her virtuous nature, the courtesan *Chuner* has risen from being an outcast, to becoming an official's wife.

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[6] Feng 381.
[7] Feng 381.

Du Shiniang 杜十娘 in *Du Shiniang nuchen baibao xiang* 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 (*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger)

Du Shiniang 杜十娘 was a celebrated courtesan in *Beijing* 北京. During her seven years in the "skin and flesh" (*pirou* 皮肉) business, "she [has] met countless young men of rich and noble families who [have been] so besotted by her charm that they [have] never hesitated to spend all they had to win her attention."[8]

After meeting the wealthy and devoted *Li Jia* 李甲, the son of a high provincial official and a student of the imperial academy, who is "not only handsome and amiable but also open-handed and untiring in his pursuit of her,"[9] *Du Shiniang* decides that she has finally met the right man and she resigns from her profession. *Li Jia* also shares the same feelings for *Du Shiniang*. After he stays in her place for nearly a year, *Li Jia*'s financial decline begins to make his presence unwelcome. However, *Li Jia* insists on staying behind because he cannot stand to leave *Du Shiniang*, even though his father has sent him numerous letters angrily asking for his return.

In the meantime, despite the constant nagging of her mother, *Du Shiniang* refuses to send him away, keeping in mind that *Li Jia* has spent a large sum of money on them prior to his present unfortunate situation. When her mother swears that *Du Shiniang* can have her freedom if her lover can raise three hundreds *taels* in ten days, *Du Shiniang* helps *Li Jia* with half of the sum. However, he returns six days later with empty hands. After *Du Shiniang* tells him that one hundred and fifty *taels* are hidden in her mattress, *Li Jia* immediately brings over the mattress to his friend *Liu Yuchun* 柳遇春, proving to him that his prior judgment of her has

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[8] Richard M. W. Ho, trans., "*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, Inc., 1986) 147. For the original Chinese version, see Feng, "*Du Shiniang nuchen baibao xiang*杜十娘怒沉百寶箱, *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 388.

[9] Ho 147. Feng, 388.

been wrong. Amazed by *Du Shiniang*'s sincerity, *Liu Yuchun* raises the other half for his friend. By presenting the three hundred *taels* on the tenth day to her procuress, *Du Shiniang* formally resigns from her courtesanship and departs with her lover, *Li Jia*.

However, with his incapable and meek nature, *Li Jia* not only proves that he is incapable of caring for *Du Shiniang*, but also becomes a constant burden to her. Knowing that the poor scholar has neither money nor plans, *Du Shiniang* tells him that she will borrow twenty *taels* of white silver from her sisters for travel expenses. She attempts to ease his worries and suggests that she will sojourn around in *Su Hang* 蘇杭 area so that he can seek help from his relatives to ask for his father's forgiveness and then present her to his family later. Finally, she pays for their expenses by taking money from the jewel box brought along by her sisters *Xie Yuelang* 謝月郎 and *Xu Susu* 徐素素 to bid them farewell. She never reveals the source of her wealth to *Li Jia*, but instead tells him the money they spend on the road is from her sisters. Thus, the clever courtesan helps her lover little by little during their journey whenever necessary.

Unfortunately, *Du Shiniang*'s does not achieve her optimistic plan. Without knowing that she will give him the money he needs to return home, *Li Jia* has no plan for himself or his lover, and constantly fears reconciliation with his father. Therefore, when his acquaintance *Sun Fu* 孫富, a young wealthy salt merchant's son, asks to anchor his boat beside *Li*'s, and cunningly suggests that he is willing to pay one thousand *taels* to *Li Jia* for *Du Shiniang* so that *Li Jia* can have the money to bring home, the passive and submissive scholar never suspects *Sun*'s true intentions and accepts his suggestion. *Li Jia* is, in fact, glad that *Sun Fu* has provided him with a solution to relieve his worries.

When *Du Shiniang* learns of her lover's plan, she feels devastated: "Abruptly and rudely awakened from her dream of a happy married life with her lover, whose despicable nature now bared itself like an open book, she calmly

accepted her fate and made a desperate move."[10] Not only does *Li Jia* fail to trust her, despite her repeated solutions to their problems and her faithfulness toward him for two years, when given the choice between reconciling with his father and staying with her, *Li Jia* feels no guilt in choosing the former and discarding her near the end of their hardships. He reveals his lack of regret when *Du Shiniang* consents to *Li Jia*'s terms. Before she enters into *Sun*'s boat the next day, "*Shih-niang* [steals] a glance at *Li* and [sees] that he looked pleased."[11] Feeling disappointed by life, herself and her lover, *Du Shiniang* asks *Li Jia* to pull out the drawers from her jewel box so that she can throw her jewelry into the river. When *Li Jia* remorsefully embraces the courtesan, *Du Shiniang* addresses the men. First, she expresses her resentment against *Sun Fu*; then, she reveals the truth of her gilt box, her plans and her disappointment in *Li Jia*. To end her meaningless life, the renowned courtesan embraces her gilt box and jumps into the roaring river.

The unfair death of *Du Shiniang* is finally avenged by Heaven. Because of the sight of the one thousand *taéls* and his longing for *Du Shiniang*, *Li Jia* feels more shame and regret, which ultimately rob him of his senses. As for *Sun Fu*, he begins to see *Du Shiniang* standing by his bed, reprimanding him, and he falls ill with fright, eventually dying in his own bed. On the other hand, because of his generous help in raising *Du Shiniang*'s ransom, *Liu Yuchun* is rewarded with her jewel box after a fisherman tries to recover *Liu*'s brass basin from the river.

Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒 in *Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan
蔣興哥重會珍珠衫 (The Pearl Shirt Reencountered)

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[10] Liu Wu-chi, An Introduction to Chinese Literature (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966) 220.
[11] Ho 158. Feng 397.

In the beginning of the story, the stunning beauty *Sanqiao'er* 三巧兒 is presented as the virtuous and devoted wife of the merchant *Jiang Xingge* 蔣興哥. Although a husband does not wish to be separated from his newly wed wife, *Xingge* decides that he must take up his father's business once again, after neglecting it for five years. In spite of his promise to return after one year, and a fortune-teller's prediction of his imminent return on New Year's Day, *Sanqiao'er* is tempted to peer outside of the front curtain several times a day, ignoring her husband's previous warning of possible trouble due to the wife's unfathomable beauty. The protagonist's desperation causes her to mistake *Chen Dalang* 陳大郎, a stranger on the street, for her husband. In the process, she reveals her dazzling charm to an outsider, causing him to lust after her. Later, he thinks to himself,

"Though my wife at home is rather pretty in her own way, how could she ever compare with this woman? I must get a message to her somehow, but I've no way to get in. If I could just spend a night with her, even though it cost me my entire capital, this life would not have been lived in vain."[12]
(家中妻子，雖是有些顏色，怎比得婦人一半？欲待通箇情款，爭奈無門可入。若得謀他一宿，就消花這些本錢，也不枉爲人在世。)[13]

Sanqiao'er's aura of charm and *Dalang*'s subsequent acts suggest that *Sanqiao'er* is a *femme fatale*. *Dalang* lavishly bribes the pearl seller Granny *Xue* 薛婆 to help him achieve his lustful desires, Granny's sharp tongue, friendship and enticement prevail upon *Sanqiao'er*, finally granting *Dalang* an opportunity to sleep with *Xingge*'s once devoted wife. Thus, *Dalang* sinks into a sea of lust and

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[12] Jeanne Kelly, trans., "The Pearl Shirt Reencountered," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, Inc., 1986) 269.
[13] Feng, "*Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫," *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 6.

desire, and by ignoring her own chastity, *Sanqiao'er* also drowns in his passion and affection:

"She would gladly have packed a few of her valuables and run off with him, to be his wife forever,"[14]
(婦人到情願收拾了些細軟，跟隨漢子逃走，去做長久夫妻。)[15]

Thus, *Sanqiao'er* begins the process that will lead to the eventual downfall of her and her new lover.

Similar to what occurs in the "Net of Heaven," *Sanqiao'er*'s husband suspects her adultery after she gives a "pearl shirt," an heirloom of the *Jiang* family, to *Dalang*. Because of this shirt and his coincidental friendship with Master *Luo* 羅小官人 (*Jiang Xingge*), *Dalang* unwittingly reveals his illicit affair with *Sanqiao'er* to her husband. The disclosure of the "pearl shirt," therefore, becomes the agent of *Dalang*'s destruction. After *Jiang Xingge* sees the "pearl shirt" and hears *Dalang*'s confession, *Xingge* returns home and divorces *Sanqiao'er*. Thus, *Sanqiao'er*'s unintentional degrading of herself by committing adultery ends with a divorce. Although she later remarries *Xingge*, she is downgraded from the rank of a first wife to that of a concubine.

Similarly, *Dalang* is also the victim of his own lustful desires. After his return and with the exposure of his illicit affair, his lover, *Sanqiao'er*, is remarried as the concubine of *Wu Jinshi* 吳進士 of *Nanjing* 南京. Later, *Dalang* becomes ill and dies. Later, in order to transport her husband's coffin back home, *Dalang*'s wife, *Ping Shi* 平氏, sells herself for money, coincidentally becoming the official wife of *Jiang Xingge*. Thus, *Dalang* pays with his life for his lustful desires and

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[14] Kelly 281.
[15] Feng 16-7.

the destruction of *Sanqiao'er*'s marriage. In addition, *Dalang* also loses his original wife to *Jiang Xingge*, confirming the old moral saying,

"Though men's hearts may be blind,/ The way of Heaven does not err./ If I do not defile the wives of other men,/ They will not violate mine."[16]
(人心或可昧，天道不差移。我不淫人婦，人不淫我妻。)[17]

***Wu Niangzi* 巫娘子 in *Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niao mihua jizhongji Jia Xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨 (Old Nun *Zhao* Bewilders the Flower with Wine After Wine, *Jia* the Graduate Revenges with Tactic Within Tactic)**

Wu Niangzi 巫娘子 is the chaste and beautiful wife of *Jia Xiucai* 賈秀才. Similar to *Jiang Xingge*, *Jia Xiucai* spends half a year in a wealthy household to carry on with his studies. Like most women whose husbands are away from home, *Wu Niangzi* resides in her inner chamber where she weaves with her waiting maid, *Chunhua* 春花, while continuing with her monotonous life. Because of the moral restrictions that make any kind of public appearance by her improper, *Wu Niangzi* eases her loneliness with frequent visits by the garrulous *Zhao*, the nun 趙尼姑 from *Guanyin An* 觀音庵.

Wu Niangzi's association with *Zhao* eventually causes *Wu Niangzi* to lose her chastity. Without realizing her companion's licentious nature, *Wu Niangzi* does not distance herself from this outsider. When *Zhao* invites her to the nunnery to recite a sutra to pray for an heir, *Wu Niangzi* immediately consents to her suggestion, prompting the narrator to comment,

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[16] Kelly 264.
[17] Feng 1.

"However, as for nunneries and monasteries, sons and daughters from good families should not go there lightly."
(但是尼庵僧院，好人家兒女，不該輕易去的!)[18]

The chaste *Wu Niangzi* is unaware that a lustful trap has been set by both the nun and the libertine *Bu Liang* 卜良, who has seen both *Zhao* and *Wu Niangzi* at her doorstep, and been thoroughly stunned by *Wu*'s beauty.

Knowing that *Wu Niangzi* is unable to ingest even a drop of wine, *Zhao* asks the innocent wife to arrive at the nunnery at a very early hour in the morning. Although *Wu Niangzi* has missed her early meal, and has additionally fasted for two days, *Zhao* deliberately fails to offer her guest some food and also does not inquire if she is hungry. By the time they finish reciting the sutra, the visitor is so hungry that she immediately eats the sponge cake offered by the nun. Because of her empty stomach, when *Wu Niangzi* eats the sponge cake which, unknown to her, was made with wine, the chaste wife begins to feel dizzy. The unconscious woman unwittingly yields her body to the artful *Bu Liang*, who hides inside *Zhao*'s bedroom, waiting for the delivery of his prey.

After her defilement, *Wu Niangzi* walks out of the nunnery without uttering a word to the nun. Longing to see her husband one more time before ending her life, the once chaste wife prays to her embroidered Buddha for revenge against her rapist. The same night, her husband dreams of her embroidered Buddha, and he leaves for home the next day. *Wu Niangzi* then reveals the whole truth to *Jia Xiucai* after his return. In the end, for the sake of protecting her reputation and his future, and to avoid possible open vilification and humiliation, *Jia Xiucai* forgives his wife's misconduct. He placates his wife by developing tactics to retaliate for

the wrong done to her. He asks her to invite *Zhao* to set up another meeting with *Bu Liang*. During this encounter, she endures the kissing and bites off *Bu Liang*'s tongue. The husband then goes to the nunnery, kills *Zhao* and put *Bu Liang*'s tongue into the mouth of her young disciple, *Ben Kong* 本空. Later on, when the deaths are discovered, the district magistrate proclaims the killer as one who has lost his tongue. When *Bu Liang* is caught, the magistrate construes the situation as a simple rape and murder case. That is, *Bu Liang* attempted to rape the young disciple by killing the elder nun first, and the young disciple bit off *Bu Liang*'s tongue during resistance prior to her own death. The rapist receives more than fifty blows during a beating and dies.

Wang Jiaoluan 王嬌鸞 in *Wang Jiaoluan bainian changhen* 王嬌鸞百年長恨 (The Hundred-Year Hatred of *Wang Jiaoluan*)

Wang Jiaoluan 王嬌鸞, the elder daughter of the commander *Wang Zhong* 王忠, possesses the qualities of a beauty (*jiaren* 佳人): beauty and talent. Due to her father's careful selection of a spouse for her, and his need for her to take care of his official dispatches, *Jiaoluan* has not yet received a suitable marriage proposal although she is eighteen years old. Unlike her younger sister *Jiaofeng* 嬌鳳, who has a marriage arranged with her cousin, *Jiaoluan* has only her Aunt *Cao* 曹姨 and her waiting-maid, *Mingxia* 明霞 for close companions.

Despite living in an orthodox family, *Jiaoluan* still develops a natural yearning for love and passion. With her "aura of charm," the maiden's wish is finally granted when she meets her neighbor, the scholar *Zhou Tingzhang* 周廷章. While *Jiaoluan* and her companions are playing on the swing in her backyard,

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[18] Ling Mengchu, "*Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niwen mihua jizhongji Jia Xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨," *Chuke Paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 81.

Tingzhang stretches his neck to view her and applauds her from his side of the fence. His unexpected appearance somehow frightens the shy maidens, who quickly depart. After he leaps over the wall and picks up her "three-feet-long embroidered handkerchief," *Tingzhang* initiates their clandestine affair through the exchange of poems. He reveals his infatuation for her talent and charm as he cunningly moves himself from her outer sphere (the backyard) to her inner sphere (her bedroom).

In addition to sending his poems to *Jiaoluan* to convey his admiration, *Tingzhang* employs a few schemes to obtain his desired goal after *Jiaoluan*'s father hesitates to accept his marriage proposal. First, *Tingzhang* asks his own father to make a family alliance with the *Wang*s, so that the scholar can read in their backyard. Later when he learns that *Jiaoluan* is ill, *Tingzhang* lies that since he has grown up on the south side of the river, he knows the principles of medicine. He requests that he be allowed to feel her pulse, and then suggests a "cure": the maiden should stroll in the backyard to let out her sorrow. As the back door between the house and the backyard opens freely, and the maid, *Mingxia*, has the key, the scholar finally asks if he may visit the maiden's bedroom. Thus, after his impulsive consent to their marriage vow, he manages to fulfill his desire.

Pretending to be ill, *Tingzhang* requests a prolonged stay. His request and his pursuit of his studies, despite his father's transfer to another post, display his sincerity for *Jiaoluan*. However, the scholar's attraction to *Jiaoluan*'s "aura of charm" is ephemeral. After learning of his father's sickness and being persuaded by *Jiaoluan* to visit his ailing parent, *Tingzhang* promises her that he will return with a marriage proposal in less than one year. However, after his return, upon being notified that an arrangement has been made for him to wed the daughter of the *Wei* 魏 family, the heartless *Tingzhang* completely discards the maiden from his mind and heart once he learns that his future bride has both stunning beauty and wealth.

Tingzhang's determination to completely end his affair with *Jiaoluan*, so as to secure his position as a filial son and a faithful husband, is illustrated at first by his having no contact with *Jiaoluan*. Later, when a business man drops off two silver hairpins and her letter to the scholar, *Tingzhang* writes to her, lying about his father's prolonged sickness, which he claims is causing his delay. Finally, when the servant *Sun Jiu* 孫九 delivers *Jiaoluan*'s letter to *Tingzhang* in person, the scholar is too ashamed to reply himself; instead, he sends his young servant to deliver his message. Explaining that his master has already been married to the *Wei*s' daughter for two years, the young servant returns both *Jiaoluan*'s three-feet-long embroidered handkerchief and her marriage agreement with *Tingzhang*, in order to convince *Jiaoluan* to give up all hope of continuing her affair with him.

Without any news from him for three years, *Jiaoluan* has been clinging to her belief that his love for her remains, but sub-consciously, she knows that it is lost. Torn between her knowledge of the truth and her passion, the maiden does not want to accept the reality:

"I heard that Master *Zhao* has already been married into another clan, still I don't know if this news is true or not. However, for three years he has not returned, so his heart might have changed. But since I have not received another letter, my heart [for him] still won't die."
聞說周郎已婚他族，此信未知眞假。然三年不來，其心腸亦改變矣。但不得一實信，吾心終不死。[19]

After the young servant confirms *Tingzhang*'s marriage, *Jiaoluan* is completely devastated, but before she takes her own life, *Jiaoluan* decides to revenge her betrayal:

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[19] Feng, "*Wang Jiaoluan bainian changhen* 王嬌鸞百年長恨," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 422.

"I, *Jiaoluan*, am a beloved daughter of a notable family, with beauty and talent. If I just die, then I am simply making it convenient for the heartless person."
我嬌鸞名門愛女，美貌多才。若嘿嘿而死，却便宜了薄情之人。[20]

In revenge, the clever maiden puts *Tingzhang*'s previous poems, the *Jueming Shi* 絕命詩 and *Changhen Ge* 長恨歌, and two of their marriage agreements into an envelope, and sends these along with her father's official document to the elder governor of *Wu Jiangque* 吳江闕. When Duke *Fan* 樊公 reads the envelope's contents, he is so enraged at *Tingzhang*'s conduct that he summons the heartless scholar to court. Then the duke orders his runners to beat *Tingzhang* to death, as he has committed three crimes: having lewd dalliance with an official's daughter, remarrying, and causing *Jiaoluan*'s death due to his lecherous behavior. *Tingzhang*'s cold-hearted decision toward his devoted *Jiaoluan* not only ruins his reputation, but also costs him his life.

Unlike the ending in a *Caizi jiaren* story, the clandestine affair costs *Jiaoluan* and *Tingzhang* their lives. By taking the love affair into their own hands instead of putting it into their parents', the beauty commits suicide and the scholar repays for her life with his.

The Situational Type: the *Femme Fatale* who "lures men into dangerous or compromising situations"

***Jinnu* 金奴 in *Xinqiaoshi Han Wu mai chunqing* 新橋市韓五賣春情 (*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charm at the New Bridge Market)**

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[20] Feng 423.

Jinnu is an attractive and educated prostitute. Long before taking over her family's prostitution business, she achieves every maiden's dream of a blessed marriage. However, her immoral nature in due course causes disgrace for both her and her husband's family:

"At the time she had herself been married, but because she did not keep to her proper place and stirred up troubles in her husband's home and had affairs with others, she was sent back to her own family's home"[21]
(當時已自嫁與人去了。只因在夫家不坐疊，做出來，發回娘家)[22].

Having been released from her marriage bond and wanting to free her aged mother from prostitution, the licentious *Jinnu* naturally assumes her mother's profession; by conducting it even on a larger scale, she frees herself and her family from a meager livelihood.

To search for a potential long-term provider, *Jinnu* and her mother relocate their home to *Huiqiao Shi* 灰橋市, enabling *Jinnu* to meet the young, wealthy married merchant *Wu Shan* 吳山. Coincidentally, *Jinnu* and her family happen to rent the rear rooms of *Wu Shan*'s store, an unexpected opportunity that leads this newfound victim to fall into her web. During their first encounter in his store, *Wu Shan* is stunned by *Jinnu*'s beauty and feels like "[a] body, like the moon at dawn, falling prey to mountain peaks;/ A life like a midnight lamp, its oil exhausted"[23] (身如五鼓銜山月，命似三更油盡燈).[24] Rather than blaming the manager for not notifying him prior to the strangers' arrival, *Wu Shan* uncharacteristically offers the *femme fatale* a helping hand. *Wu Shan* becomes obsessed with *Jinnu*

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[21] Robert C. Miller and the editors, trans., "*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charm at the New Bridge Market," Ma and Lau 316.
[22] Feng, "*Xinqiaoshi Han Wu mai chunqing* 新橋市韓五賣春情(*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charms at the New Bridge Market)," *Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 51.
[23] Miller 314.
[24] Feng 49.

throughout the night, even after he retires for the day. However, because of his parents' control, *Wu Shan* has had no chance to visit any place of ill repute. This inexperienced merchant does not have the acquired knowledge to be aware of wanton professionals like *Jinnu*. Controlled by his infatuation towards his new tenant, *Wu Shan* says nothing of her to his parents and his wife, *Yu Shi* 余氏, so that he may continue his flirtations.

After *Wu Shan*'s arrival at his store early next morning, *Jinnu* sends her servant to invite her landlord over for tea and for the signing of the lease. The disguised prostitute then starts to excite him with suggestive talk. When *Wu Shan* senses that she is excessively aggressive and suggests that he should leave, *Jinnu* immediately asks to borrow his hairpin. In order to prevent him from leaving, the opportunistic woman decides to immediately initiate an illicit affair. Before *Wu Shan* pulls his hairpin out from his hair bun, *Jinnu* pulls it out for him and proposes to have a word with him upstairs. After *Wu Shan* follows her upstairs and demands the return of his hairpin before he leaves, the seductress wastes no time and removes her mask of propriety by saying that

"You and I in a former life were fated to be lovers, so don't go on pretending. Come, let's have some fun"[25]
(我與你是宿世姻緣，你不要粧假，願諧枕席之懽).[26]

By "resorting to all sorts of seductions, she embraced and clung to him. As her smooth slender fingers loosened his garments, his passion rose like fire and could no longer be held
back."[27](怎奈那婦人放出萬種妖嬈，摟住吳山，倒在懷中，攜手上床

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[25] Miller 315.
[26] Feng 50.
[27] Miller 315.

，成其雲雨。)[28]

Jinnu's sudden change of plan moves her closer toward her ultimate goal, as *Wu Shan* loses his senses completely despite his prior misgivings about her. Following their escapade, *Wu Shan* disregards his suspicions of her true identity, and reveals his family's finances to the money-grubber. Aware of her new-found fortune, the avaricious *Jinnu* thinks to herself, "[having] such a rich fellow on my hook now isn't a bad deal at all"[29]
(今番纏得這個有錢的男兒，也不枉了。),[30] and immediately persuades *Wu Shan* to lend her five *taels*.

During *Wu Shan*'s subsequent visit, he suggests to *Jinnu* and her family that they relocate again due to the numerous rumors about her and the neighbor's complaints to the manager. Although this suggestion illustrates *Wu Shan*'s acknowledgment of the inappropriateness of his illicit affair with *Jinnu*, he still provides the *femme fatale* with three *taels* as a moving expense, so that he can carry on his clandestine affair. However, he is not aware that her servant has once again called upon her former patrons. *Jinnu* further attempts to draw *Wu Shan* deeper into the abyss of infatuation by sending him two stuffed tripes as a small token of her good wishes during his summer illness. Acknowledging her "kindness," *Wu Shan* in turn sends her five *taels* of silver accompanied by a reply to her.

Wu Shan's later determination to pay a visit to their new love nest at the "Cross-Bridge Street to the south of the Wool Fort of the Patrol Barracks" (遊奕營羊毛寨南橫橋街上) takes him to the verge of death. Because of his longing for his mistress, *Wu Shan* has little concern for his incomplete recovery from his summer illness, and pays his kept woman a visit. Despite his illness and

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[28] Feng 50.
[29] Miller 316.

his one-month abstinence from love-making, once *Wu Shan* sees the temptress *Jinnu*, he is overwhelmed with passion and sleeps with her at the expense of his weakened health. *Wu Shan*'s deteriorated health, particularly following his lustful pursuits in the daytime, leads him to dream that a monk's spirit is coming to claim his life. After he returns home with bloody diarrhea and consults with a doctor, *Wu Shan* learns that his fatal illness has been caused by "sexual exhaustion resulting from the dissipation of the vital force." In the end, *Wu Shan*'s second dream of the same monk's visit leads him to reveal the truth to his family. Because of this dream, *Wu Shan*'s father invites several monks to make an all-night sacrifice at *Jinnu*'s house. As a result, *Wu Shan* recuperates for six months and finally recovers from his nearly fatal illness.

After his near encounter with death, *Wu Shan* realizes his mistake:

"Perhaps this is the year that I was fated to run into this woman and meet my nemesis, so what is the use of my repentance now? Let my example of losing life through improper conduct be a lesson to all young men. Life is indeed man's most valuable possession. Let those who are attracted to licentiousness know what has happened to me"[31]
(也是年災命厄，逢着這個冤家。今日雖悔，噬臍何及!
傳與少年子弟，不要學我幹這等非爲的事，害了自己性命。男子六尺之軀，實是難得，要貪花戀色的，將我來做個樣。)[32]

His final realization that "people living in the world ought not do anything against their own consciences. Just as there are people who take you to task openly, there are spirits who censure you in the dark"[33]

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[30] Feng 51.
[31] Miller 323.
[32] Feng 58.
[33] Miller 324.
[34] Feng 59.

(人生在世，切莫爲昧己勾當。眞個明有人非，幽有鬼責)[34] can be seen as a moral warning for all men.

Zhao Xianjun **趙縣君 in *Zhao Xianjun qiaosong huanggan Wu Xuanjiao ganchang baiqiang* 趙縣君喬送黃柑 吳宣教乾償白鏹 (Madam *Zhao* Pretends to send Yellow Oranges, Officer *Wu* Unfairly Pays Money in Vain)**

The wealthy *Wu Yue* 吳約 is a *Xuanjiao Lang* 宣教郎. After serving two terms as a junior officer for *Guang* 廣, *Wu Yue* is sent from the Board of Records to the Board of Civil Office. For his long-term residency in the south, *Wu Yue* brings along his accumulated precious jewellery and other goods to his new post and stays at an inn in *Qinghe Fang* 清河坊. Out of boredom, he begins to pay frequent visits to the entertainment quarters. His well-dressed attire causes him to stand out in the crowd. His ignorance of how to conduct himself in public attracts the attention of *Zhao Xianjun* and her accomplices.

Standing daily behind her blue screen opposite to where *Wu Yue* resides, the temptress pretends to watch the bustling street. With her soft and delicate voice and her sometimes exposed small, delicate feet, "a marker of refinement and class distinction,"[35] the *femme fatale* succeeds in luring *Wu Yue* to wonder about her identity: "There is no more marvelous person in the world. When I think of it, I can imagine definitely she is beautiful, it is a pity I can't steal a look at her!" (世間無此妙人，想來必定標緻，可惜未能勾一見!)[36]

One day as she witnesses *Wu Yue* betting with the tangerine dealer, the

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[35] Dorothy Ko, "The Written Word and the Bound Foot: A History of the Courtesan's Aura," Writing Women in Late Imperial China, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997) 76.

temptress uses this opportunity to begin an aggressive "advance" to capture her prey. First, she sends her boy servant to bring over a box of ten tangerines to *Wu Yue*, as she has witnessed her target losing ten thousand in cash to the tangerine dealer. Being already interested in the stranger, and after learning that the lady of his dreams is the wife of a great officer of the State, *Zhao Daifu* 趙大夫, who is away for two months, *Wu Yue* immediately sends the Madam two pieces of colored cloth in return. In order to portray herself as a refined and virtuous woman, this female schemer immediately rejects her admirer's gift, but finally keeps it after he sends it back. Second, in order to convince her victim of her concern for him, *Zhao Xianjun* asks her boy servant to bring him a few jars of her own delicate side dishes, using her gratitude for his substantial gifts as an excuse. After *Zhao Xianjun* has displayed her concern for two consecutive days, *Wu Yue* naturally interprets her kindness as a sign of mutual interest, which is exactly what the *femme fatale* wants him to believe. Because of the two days of "advances" made by the temptress, *Wu Yue* decides to respond to her accordingly.

After two consecutive days of displaying her interest, the crafty temptress then "retreats" for another two days. On the third day, for the sake of testing whether her prey is still biting at her bait, *Zhao Xianjun* sends her boy servant over to the inn to find *Wu Yue*. Learning of her incomparable beauty, the lecher then bribes his greedy go-between to request a meeting with the woman. *Wu Yue*'s request confirms to *Zhao Xianjun* that he is falling for her. Once again, she decides to "retreat" for another two days before she grants him a visit.

With the excuse that it would be "improper" to pay a sudden visit, *Wu Yue* decides that he will pretend to be a jeweler and present his goods for the lady's private selection. Once he is inside *Zhao Xianjun*'s living quarters, *Wu Yue* falls deeper down the abyss of his infatuation. After he finally meets the celestial

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[36] Ling Mengchu. "*Zhao xianjun qiaosong huanggan Wu xuanjiao ganchang baiqiang* 趙縣君喬送黃柑 吳宣教乾償白鏹." *Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of

being, it is only human nature for him to desire more, and so the infatuated *Wu Yue* tries to touch the Madam's hands when he presents his bag of pearls. Unexpectedly, the Madam asks her boy servant to receive the bag instead, while she "retreats" to her boudoir. At that moment, *Wu Yue* sighs, "I would have been fine if I hadn't actually seen her. However, this meeting definitely will kill me!" (不見時猶可，只這一番相見，定害殺了小生也!)[37]

During their subsequent meetings, with her false image of higher culture and education in mind, *Zhao Xianjun* continues to carry herself with dignity when dealing with her prey. The narrator comments on this poor and gullible pursuer:

"... *Wu Yue* had nowhere to begin in his illicit affair. With his heart and soul in disorder, he concentrated on doting on her so much he could not stop." (那宣教没入脚處，越越的心魂撩亂，注戀不捨了。)[38]

Wu Yue's infatuation for the Madam finally reaches an apex. He pays fewer visits to his favorite prostitute, *Ding Xixi* 丁惜惜, and after his lovemaking with her, dreams of a naked *Zhao Xianjun* inviting him to bed. *Wu Yue*'s daily life is obviously disrupted by his constant thoughts of the Madam.

A few days after their meeting, the boy servant suddenly goes to *Wu Yue* to announce the Madam's forthcoming birthday. Rather than sending an invitation, and wanting to maintain the pretense of chastity, the *femme fatale* asks her boy servant to suggest to *Wu Yue* that he should send her birthday gifts. Taking her suggestion as another good opportunity to get closer to her, *Wu Yue* sends over lavish presents prior to his visit. The next day, when he arrives, *Zhao Xianjun* comes out in person to accept his congratulations. Using her acceptance of his lavish birthday presents as an excuse, the Madam invites him to stay for her

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Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1981) 204.
[37] Ling 207.

birthday meal. Keeping him company for awhile, the temptress again uses her husband's absence as the reason for her "retreat."

Up to this point, *Wu Yue* is still puzzled about her motives:

"Let's say she has no love for me, then why has she allowed me to see her two to three times and asked me to stay for a meal and kept me company? If one says she has love for me, then why there isn't any sign in her eyes even when [I] glance at her, and she remains just as usual and shows no expression?"
(若說是無情，如何兩次三番許我會面，又留酒，又肯相陪？若說是有情，如何眉梢眼角，不見些些光景，只是恁等板板地？)[39]

Either because of his intense infatuation, or his self-analyses, or both, *Wu Yue* decides to pacify his own confused feelings for the *femme fatale* by exchanging poems and tokens with this upper-class wife. Their reciprocated correspondence finally grants him a chance to fulfill his lustful desires. Ironically, the same opportunity that allows *Wu Yue* a chance to win the enormous prize also enables *Zhao Xianjun* to blackmail the ignorant officer.

One evening, the boy servant suddenly comes over with her invitation for a meeting in her bedroom. *Wu Yue* immediately pays the boy servant twenty *taels* of silver to bribe the other servants and then crosses the street to attend to the lady. When he sees her, unlike the previous Madam who put up a stern front, the "new" *Zhao Xianjun* abruptly puts down her mask of decorum. Finally, before they go to bed, a fake "husband" unexpectedly returns. Although *Wu Yue* follows the Madam's instruction to lie on the dusty floor under her bed, the noise his sleeves make with the flowing of water as the Master washes his feet discloses *Wu Yue*'s whereabouts.

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[38] Ling 207.
[39] Ling 209.

The story reaches its climax at this point. After the Master ties both of them up and threatens to take them to court, *Zhao Xianjun* wastes no time in suggesting to *Wu Yue* that he should try to beg to her soft-hearted husband. Taking his post into consideration, *Wu Yue* suggests increasing his ransom to one thousand strings of cash. When the Master does not agree, the boy servant suggests that the victim increase his ransom again so as to reach a settlement. Finally, the Master settles for two thousand strings of cash. Although this is the ransom they both agree upon, when the servants go with *Wu Yue* to his place for the money, they also take away most of his accumulated jewellery and goods.

Although *Wu Yue* is tricked, he still appreciates *Zhao Xianjun*. He pleads with her "husband" to release him, hoping that he and the madam can still continue their unfinished affair after her "husband" has departed. Only on the next day, when he discovers an empty house, does *Wu Yue* finally realize the swindle.

With the loss of his money from the scam, *Wu Yue* is unable to wait for his post, and as a result, returns to his homeland. Unfortunately, *Wu Yue*'s constant confusion results in his death before he can serve at his new post.

Zhou Chunxiang 周春香 **in** ***Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia*** 喬彥傑一妾破家 **(The Concubine of** ***Qiao Yanjie*** **Ruins His Family)**

Zhou Chunxiang is the concubine of the deceased sub-district deputy, Magistrate *Zhou* 周巡檢. Following a mere glimpse of her stunning beauty, the wealthy and lecherous merchant, *Qiao Jun* 喬俊, does not hesitate to seek the hand of the *femme fatale* as his concubine. While the former is on her way back to her family in *Shandong* 山東 for their master's burial, and the latter is on his way home after his usual business trip to *Dongjing* 東京, the mutual agreement

between Madam *Zhou* 周夫人 and *Qiao Jun* to one thousand strings of cash for her betrothal present brings *Zhou Shi* to set her feet onto her new husband's boat.

The introduction of a rival into her family causes *Gao Shi* 高氏 to fly into a fury. In order to maintain her own financial security, this tyrannical wife proclaims two conditions that her husband *Qiao Jun* must follow. First, she orders her husband to live in a separate abode with his concubine, and second, not to use any of their previous savings and necessities which are on hand, and to be responsible for any subsequent household affairs. With the absence of their husband and the refusal of household responsibilities by the wife, *Chunxiang* is left with no choice but to consent to the village elder's suggestion: hiring and providing room and board for the orphan *Dong Xiao'er* 董小二, so that he can replace the absent husband in building the river-wall.

Chunxiang attempts to seduce *Dong Xiao'er* in order to satisfy her insatiable sexual appetite. She needs another man because of the delayed return of her own husband from his silk-business excursion, as well as her suspicion that he has once again dallied with the prostitutes. However, *Zhao Shi*'s desire is aimed at any convenient man, as in a strict sense, she is *touhan* 偷漢 (to steal a man)[40]; it is just by chance that this is her hired laborer, *Dong Xiao'er*. Confirming his concubine's suspicions, the lascivious *Qiao Jun* again visits the pleasure quarters, has a liaison with a prostitute named *Shen Ruilian* 沈瑞蓮, and does not return home at his promised time. In the company of his new playmate, *Qiao Jun* completely puts his family and his return date out of his mind.

Ironically, inside *Qiao Jun* own house, the *femme fatale* begins to curry favor by cooking hot meals for *Xiao'er* after he retires from work, and by frequently glancing flirtatiously at him. Later, using the celebration of New Year's Eve as an excuse, *Chunxiang* asks *Xiao'er* to have a feast in her bedroom to

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[40] Keith McMahon, "Eroticism in Late Ming, Early Qing Fiction: The Beauteous Realm and the Sexual Battlefield," T'oung Pao LXXIII (1987): 235.

celebrate, saying "*Xiao'er*, come on come on, I will drink two goblets of wine with you, then you sleep in my room tonight"
(小二你來你來，我和你喫兩盃酒，今夜你就在我房裏睡罷。)[41]
Realizing that her servant dares not respond to her suggestion, this female libertine carries *Xiao'er* in her arms, bringing him over to the edge of her bed. With his own pre-existing interest in his madam, *Xiao'er* succumbs to her lust without further resistance.

Taking into consideration the neighbors' rumors of their illicit affair, as well as the need to lower the household's expenses, *Gao Shi* sends the wine maker *Hong San* 洪三 to ask the concubine to move in with her, and does not object to *Chunxiang*'s suggestion that *Xiao'er* should accompany her as an extra helping hand. During his one-year residency, *Xiao'er* constantly chases after *Gao Shi*'s nineteen-year-old daughter, *Yuxiu* 玉秀. Ignoring her resistance, the servant finally rapes the maiden in the backyard. The discovery of her daughter's pregnancy causes *Gao Shi* to abhor the male servant and she decides to kill him. With the help of *Chunxiang*, the malicious *Gao Shi* kills *Xiao'er* with an ax after several failed attempts to strangle him with a rope, and drops the corpse into the *Xinqiao* river 新橋河 with *Hong San*'s help. They then use *Xiao'er*'s theft of *Zhou Shi*'s jewellery as their alibi.

Coincidentally, the shoemaker *Chen Wen* 陳文 also becomes missing during this time. After an argument with his wife, *Cheng Wuniang* 程五娘, the shoemaker leaves his house in a rage and goes to the leather market to purchase leather. When he does not return after an entire month, *Cheng Wuniang* makes an inquiry at the leather store and finds that her husband did not arrive at his promised time. Her continued search for her husband ends as someone announces that a corpse is floating in the river. Since the face has already rotted, *Cheng Wuniang* mistakenly identifies the corpse of *Xiao'er* as her husband due to their similar

[41] Feng Menglong, comp., "*Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia* 喬彥傑一妾破家," *Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 403.

clothing. Her fifty-strings-of-cash offer to pay for getting the corpse to the shore grants the vagrant *Wang Jiujiu* 王酒酒 an opportunity to blackmail *Gao Shi*. Recognizing that the corpse is in fact *Dong Xiao'er*, *Wang Jiujiu* does not reveal the truth. Instead, he claims his reward and purchases a coffin to hold the corpse as *Cheng Wuniang* has requested and immediately goes straight to *Qiao*'s wine store to blackmail *Gao Shi*. Because she refuses to submit to his threat, the vagrant reports the murder to the court. After several rounds of cruel beatings and with the confession of their crimes, *Gao Shi*, *Chunxiang*, *Hong San*, and even the pregnant *Yuxiu* are thrown into prison, all dying within a few days. Since *Qiao Jun* cannot be found, the court decides to confiscate his entire property.

As for the lecherous husband *Qiao Jun*, after two years of staying with his paramour, he runs out of money and decides to return home. Without knowing of the disasters which have happened to his family, *Qiao Jun* is more than shocked after discovering the truth from his neighbors. Disappointment causes him to jump off the second bridge of *Xihu* 西湖上第二橋 to drown himself. Because his nosiness has caused the death of the entire *Qiao* household, *Wang Jiujiu*'s body is taken over by *Qiao Jun*'s spirit while he walks on the second bridge with his friends on the same afternoon. *Wang Jiujiu* then pays for the lives of the *Qiao* household by also jumping off the bridge and drowning in the river.

Chen Yulan 陳玉蘭 **in *Xianyun An Ruan San chang yuanzhai***
閒雲菴阮三償冤債**(*Ruan* the Third Repays an Unjust Debt in the Idle Cloud Nunnery)**

Like a typical beauty (*jiaren* 佳人), *Yulan* is "an only child [who is] cherished by her parents, especially her father, who educates her as if she was a

boy."[42] She is distinguished in every way and is at a marriageable age, but she still has not been married because of her wealthy father, *Chen Taichang* 陳太常. By selfishly making his social reputation his priority rather than considering his erudite daughter, the fastidious father ignores the role of marriage at an appropriate age as a precaution against the possibility of an illicit love affair. So by setting three criteria for any potential son-in-law before betrothing his beloved daughter, *Chen Taichang* thereby delays her marriage. As a result, *Yulan* does not have a husband even at the age of nineteen years.

After hearing the music of her neighbor *Ruan Sanlang* 阮三郎 (*Ruan Hua* 阮華) and his friends, who play outside her home during the evenings, *Yulan* acts like a nymphomanic, blindly displaying her lust for a strange man: "If I can marry such a dashing man, I won't live my married life in vain" (我若嫁得恁般風流子弟，也不枉一生夫婦。)[43] With her constant thought of the stranger, the maiden does not waste the opportunity when she hears his music again. Asking her maid to tell *Sanlang* of her mistress' admiration, and inviting the eighteen-year-old profligate young man to pay her a visit, the maiden bestows her gold diamond ring as a token and a pass for his venture.

Shortly after their initial meeting, without even exchanging a word, *Sanlang* falls for his *femme fatale* after only a glimpse of her. This profligate young man, who is a frequent visitor to the pleasure quarters, surprisingly becomes entranced by his longing for the maiden: "Because of his thoughts of her for days, gradually he felt his four limbs grow weak, even to the extent that he forgot his rest and his meals. Suddenly, more than two months passed, which resulted in his getting sick" (因是相思日久，漸覺四肢羸瘦，以致廢寢忘餐。忽經兩月有餘，懨懨成病。)[44] In order to fulfill his dream of conquest, *Sanlang* reveals the cause

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[42] Keith McMahon, "The Classic "Beauty-Scholar" Romance and the Superiority of the Talented Woman," Body, Subject and Power in China 233.
[43] Feng 62.
[44] Feng 63.

of his illness to his closest friend, *Zhang Yuan* 張遠. The love-sick patient then gives his friend two silver ingots, with the promise that he is willing to pay any price to meet with *Yulan* alone.

Sanlang's obsessive need for meeting with her is finally realized with the help of his friend *Zhang Yuan* and the nun *Wang Shouchang* 王守長, but with the ultimate cost, his life. Motivated mainly by her greed, *Wang* decides to help *Ruan Sanlang* by visiting the *Chen* household. After convincing Madam *Chen* to bring her daughter *Yulan* to temple for the birth of the Buddha, the nun secretly arranges with the maiden that she and *Wang* can carry out their tryst in the nun's bedroom.

Prior to the *Chen*'s arrival the next morning, the nun secretly transports *Sanlang* to her bedroom the night before. The next day, immediately after they have finished their lunch in the nunnery, the maiden pretends that she is dozing off. With the nun's suggestion that the mistress should take a nap in her bedroom, *Yulan* is finally granted the opportunity to meet with her beloved. Since *Yulan* failed to meet with *Sanlang* successfully during his prior visit, the lewd maiden "[falls] over herself in pleasing him and [lets] herself go in taking her own pleasure to the utmost" (倒身奉承，盡情取樂。)[45] As her only concern is for her carnal bliss, this inexperienced maiden does not notice that her prey *Sanlang* is in extremely poor health. Consequently, *Sanlang* dies during his carnal bliss.

When *Yulan* finally realizes that her beloved has died in her arms, she pretends to act calmly by redressing, then walks out the bedroom without uttering a word about his death to anyone, and leaves with her mother. Despite the discovery of Sanlang's death by both his friend *Zhang Yuan*, his brother *Ruan Er* 阮二, and later the remainder of the family, the father does not take any action against *Yulan* because of her family background and his own son's fault. Nevertheless, with *Yulan*'s pregnancy, her father, *Chen Taichang*, decides to make an agreement with *Ruan*, stating that the young couple was previously engaged, and that after their

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[45] Feng 68.

clandestine meeting in the Idle Cloud Nunnery (*Xianyun An* 閒雲菴), *Sanlang* passed away because of his longing for her.

Yulan vows to bring up the child and return him to *Sanlang*'s parents, so as to continue their lineage. Her subsequent carrying out the obligation of an official wife, by remaining faithful and loyal to *Sanlang*'s memory, living as a widow, and acting as a responsible mother, leads, in the end, to her being praised as a chaste, virtuous and sagacious mother. Regardless of her earlier role in the initiation of their illicit love affair, which resulted in *Sanlang*'s death, *Yulan* dreams of him telling her the belated explanation for his death -- in his previous life he was a man from *Nanjing* 南京, who betrayed her during her previous existence as a *Yangzhou* 楊州 courtesan after they stayed together for a year. Because of his fear of his father, he did not carry out his promise to marry her after he returned home but married someone else. As a result, she died of sorrow. Their meeting in the nunnery in the present life was her chance to be repaid for his debt; hence, he passed away instantly on the spot. In the end, this story serves as an explanation in which both receive a just retributions: she loses her maidenhood and her right to be the first wife, and he loses his life.

The Deviational Type: the *Femme Fatale* who "falls into her own desires"

***Shao Shi* 邵氏 in *Kuang Taishou duansi hai'er* 況太守斷死孩兒 (The Case of the Dead Infant)**

The beautiful *Shao Shi* is the wife of the wealthy *Qiu Yuanji* 丘元吉. After six years of marriage, *Yuanji* develops a fatal illness and passes away, leaving his wife behind. With a determined chastity, at the age of only twenty-three, *Shao Shi* vows to remain a chaste widow (*jiefu* 節婦) and never serve

another man. Although remarriage is not an ideal form of female behavior, out of a concern for her livelihood and the possibility that the young widow may eventually have an illicit affair, *Shao Shi*'s parents and even the wife of her husband's uncle, *Qiu Dasheng* 丘大勝, visit *Shao Shi* a few times, hoping that she will change her mind. Nevertheless, the chaste *Shao Shi* vows,

> "Now that my late husband rests below the Nine Springs, if I serve another family and take a second husband, I shall either perish under a knife or die by the rope."[46]
> (我亡夫在九泉之下，邵氏若事二姓，更二夫，不是刀下亡，K是繩上死。)[47]

Shao Shi is determined to be chaste. Bearing no children from her marriage, *Shao Shi* retains only her maid, *Xiu Gu* 秀姑, and her servant of ten years, *Degui* 得貴, within her household. *Xiu Gu* helps her madam to do embroidery to earn a living, while *Degui* guards the middle door, fetches all of the firewood and water, and makes all necessary purchases. The widow sends away the rest of the male servants, who have reached an age of twenty. After *Degui* reaches his manhood, *Shao Shi* is predisposed to dismiss even this seventeen-year-old, particularly since he is the only male in the household. But since *Degui* is honest and obedient, she decides to let him stay. *Shao Shi* believes that as long as she herself is honorable, she can maintain her oath by remaining a widow for the remainder of her life.

A challenge to *Shao Shi*'s chastity finally comes when the "ne-er-do-well" *Zhi Zhu* 支助 moves into the neighborhood. Upon hearing of the beauty and chastity of the young widow, *Zhi Zhu* sneaks into her center hall and catches a

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[46] C. T. Hsia and Susan Arnold Zonana, trans., "The Case of the Dead Infant," Ma and Lau 123.
[47] Feng 427.

glimpse of the beautiful *Shao Shi* when she comes out to burn incense for the three-day memorial service commemorating the death of her husband. Although *Degui* refuses to lead *Zhi Zhu* to his madam, the unconscionable neighbor convinces her serving young man to seduce his chaste madam.

Accordingly, the gullible *Degui* starts to sleep naked at night with his door open. During the following three nights, *Shao Shi* gradually lowers her moral defenses.

As a routine chore, *Shao Shi* and *Xiu Gu* check all the rooms before retiring for the night. After the first night when she sees the naked *Degui*, *Shao Shi* does not even blame him for his misconduct. As explained by the narrator, the madam forgives *Degui* mainly because "she [has] lived alone for so long that it [seems] to her the experience of seeing that rare thing [will] lengthen her life by a dozen years, and so she [keeps] absolutely mum"[48] (他久曠之人，却似眼見希奇物，壽增一紀，絕不做聲。)[49] After seeing *Degui* naked a second time, *Shao Shi* asks her maid to pull a sheet over him. The madam is concerned for her servant this second time because "she [is] somewhat aroused, but since *Xiu Gu* [is] around, she [can] not very well do anything"[50] (此時便有些動情，奈有秀姑在傍礙眼。)[51] Finally on the third night, instead of checking with *Xiu Gu*, *Shao Shi* goes to *Degui*'s room alone, throws away her chastity, and starts to act profligately with her male servant as "[she] cannot bear the rippling of her spring heart, her fire of lust is like burning" (*jinbuzhu chunxin dangyang, yuhuo rufen* 禁不住春心蕩漾，慾火如焚。)[52]

Shao Shi's sexual desires overwhelm her conscience to the point that not only does she, as a madam, shamelessly have an illicit affair with her inferior

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[48] Ma and Lau 126.
[49] Feng 430.
[50] Ma and Lau 126.
[51] Feng 430.
[52] Feng 430.

servant, but she also teaches *Degui* to seduce her virginal maid, *Xiu Gu*, so that she will not reveal her madam's secret after becoming involved herself.

Because *Shao Shi* was married for six years of marriage without becoming pregnant, she does not take any precaution against the possibility. Therefore, when *Shao Shi* gets pregnant after a few months of involvement with her servant, she then asks *Degui* to buy something that will abort their illegitimate child in order to protect her widowly reputation. The simple *Degui* instead goes to ask his mentor, *Zhi Zhu*, for advice. In order to fulfill his lustful desire for the once chaste widow, *Zhi Zhu* decides to blackmail her. He begins by deceiving the gullible *Degui*. The lewd vagrant gives him four doses of medicine to strengthen *Shao Shi*'s womb. The libertine even asks *Degui* to give him the dead infant, so that he can concoct some medicine to strengthen himself. Following the birth of the child, *Shao Shi* gives the drowned infant to *Degui* to bury, yet he immediately brings it to his mentor as he promised. *Zhi Zhu* immediately says,

> "Your mistress was the wife of Qiu Yuanji, and he has been dead for many years. With a widow in charge of the house, where did the child come from? I am going to report this to the authorities!"[53]
> (你主母是丘元吉之妻，家主已死多年，當家寡婦，這孩子從何而得？今番我去出首。)[54]

Zhi Zhu's initial blackmail of one hundreds *taels*, his proposal that he and the widow have an affair, and his final demand that *Shao Shi* submit to his sexual proposition despite his being given forty *taels* cause the once chaste widow to murder her paramour, *Degui*, out of rage, before she hangs herself:

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[53] Ma and Lau 128.
[54] Feng 431.

"Previously I took an oath before them all, 'If I serve another family and take a second husband, I will either perish under a knife or die by the rope.' Now if I sacrifice my life to show my regret to my late husband below the Nine Springs, won't that be a good way out?"[55]
(日前曾對衆發誓：我若事二姓，更二夫，不是刀下亡，便是繩上死。我今拼這性命，謝我亡夫於九泉之下，却不乾淨!)[56]

Hearing of the deaths of the widow *Shao Shi* and her servant *Degui*, *Zhi Zhu* picks up the lime-preserved infant in a rush-bag and disposes of it in the river. He bumps into his acquaintance *Bao Jiu*, who is the foreman of the canal. When the latter asks what is in the bag, *Zhi Zhu* lies that it is a bag of spoiled salted beef. However, a baby's cry from the river draws the suspicion of Lord *Kuang*. After discovering the small rush-bag containing a preserved infant and questioning the foreman, Lord *Kuang* then arrests *Zhi Zhu*. Following the testimony from the former maid, *Xiu Gu* , and his own torture, *Zhi Zhu* confesses to his crime before his deserved execution.

Wu Shi 吳氏 **in *Xishan Guan shelu du wanghun Kaifeng Fu beiguan zhui huoming*** 西山觀設籙度亡魂 開封府備棺追活命 (The Priest of the West Mountain sets up a list to save the lost soul The Prefect of *Kaifeng* prepares a coffin to chase after the alive)

After twelve years of marriage, *Wu Shi* begins her widowhood at the age of twenty-six. Separated from her in-laws and clansmen, *Wu Shi* lives alone with her twelve-year-old son, *Liu Dasheng* 劉達生, as her only companion.

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[55] Ma and Lau 129.
[56] Feng 433.

Remembering her husband's kindness, *Wu Shi* thinks of setting up a sacrifice to deliver his soul from purgatory after a hundred days of death. Thus, the mother brings her only child, *Dasheng*, to the West Hill Monastery 西山觀 for the service that will release her husband's soul from his recent death. After the reception by the lascivious Taoist priest *Huang Miaoxiu* 黃妙修, who is astounded by her beauty, the widow is led to believe that for service to be effective, it must be held in the mourning hall of her own house.

Wu Shi's good impression of the Taoist begins their first meeting. After their discussion of the forthcoming service, the widow thinks, "What a nice-looking person! But why did he become a priest? [I am] glad that he doesn't put on airs of greatness. I have heard he said that to perform a service, he is more than willing to step out of his monastery and come to my home. What an enthusiast" (好個齊整人物!如何却出了家？且喜他不裝模樣，見說做醮，便肯身出觀，來到我家，也是個出熱的人).[57] Ironically, it is his lascivious nature which motivates his generosity.

Because of her son's youth, *Wu Shi* is required to come out to receive the Taoist and his two young disciples. On the first day of the service, upon seeing the two young lads, the widow thinks, "These acolytes can after all be useful. After these two grow up, who knows how handsome they will be!" (這些出家人到如此受用？這兩個大起來，不知怎生標緻哩!)[58] The constant temptation and *Wu Shi*'s licentious nature compel the widow to often appear before the priest, conveying to him that they share a mutual interest. On the second day, the widow asks the younger disciple, *Taiqing* 太清, who slept with his master the night before, knowing that this young lad will tell his master. *Wu Shi* wants the priest to know that she is still available despite her widowhood. Later,

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[57] Ling Mengchu 凌濛初. "*Xishan Guan shelu du wanghun Kaifeng Fu beiguan zhui huoming* 西山觀設籙度亡魂 開封府備棺追活命," *Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 215.
[58] Ling 215.

Wu Shi further assures the priest that she will consent to his advances. After he recites a poem giving "thirstiness" a sexual meaning, the widow then immediately fetches her maid to bring him a half bowl of fruit and a pot of good tea to quench his thirst. On the third day, he suggests that he knows of a black art which can summon her husband's soul to meet her -- by putting a piece of white silk as a bridge in the mourning hall, he will summon the soul to cross the bridge to see her, on the condition that the doors in the mourning hall are completely shut and no one else witnesses the summons besides themselves. The clever widow discerns his intention and allows him to have his way with her, as the priest proclaims that her husband's soul can possess his body. Following their debauchery, the two libertines agree to lie that her husband's soul revealed to them that they are cousins, so that they can carry on their illicit affair. Subsequently, by using the summoning of her husband's soul as an excuse, the widow and the priest continue to act profligately on her husband's soul bed for the final four days of service. For the purpose of carrying on with their forbidden relationship afterwards, *Wu Shi* sends her son to school, so that either the disciples or the priest can come during the daytime and arrange their nocturnal tryst. Through their organized arrangement, *Wu Shi* and her paramour succeed in tasting the forbidden fruit for the next three years.

When *Liu Dasheng* has grown older, he gradually realizes the immoral conduct of his widow-mother, especially after his schoolmates address him as the "little Taoist." He decides to put an end to *Wu Shi*'s illicit affair and asks his mother to discontinue her association with the priest, *Dasheng*'s so-called "uncle." Following her refusal, *Dasheng* decides to take matters into his own hands. For the sake of protecting his mother's reputation, *Dasheng* covertly designs face-saving obstacles to ruin her nocturnal rendezvous. On six occasions, *Dasheng* successfully inconveniences his mother and her paramour.

The first occasion happens one night when *Dasheng* finds that his mother's bed is empty (they share a room together), and he immediately believes that his mother has again gone to his father's soul bed to meet with her paramour. To play a trick on his lewd mother, the son locks the bedroom door from the inside. After her love-making with the priest, she finds that her bedroom door is locked, resulting in her having to sit outside on the floor for the entire night. The next morning, when *Dasheng* sees his mother sitting outside the door and pretends to be surprised, *Wu Shi* angrily tells him that she came out to take a look after she heard some footsteps outside during the night. In return, the son explains that he saw the door was open and was afraid of a burglar, so he locked the door, thinking that his mother was sleeping inside. *Dasheng* further mockingly asks her, "Since, mother, you were outside, why not ask me to open the door? What's the meaning of your sitting here alone the whole night instead?"(既然娘在外面，如何不叫開了門？獨坐在這裏這一夜是甚麼意思？)[59] Remaining speechless, *Wu Shi* suggests that it is inappropriate for someone his age to share a bedroom with her, and she asks *Dasheng* to sleep on his father's soul bed instead of sharing her room.

The second occasion happens after *Dasheng* is ordered to sleep outside the room. Realizing his so-called uncle will go to the bedroom to meet with his mother, the son ties the door knob with a thick rope. Expecting that the libertine will escape through the window early next morning, *Dasheng* places a bucket of urine and a half-broken vat of night soil below the window. As the son predicted, when the priest cannot open the door early next morning, he jumps out the window. Finding that he has kicked down the jar and the vat, the priest continues his hastily departure with his clothes stained with urine and night soil. Before his mother awakens, *Dasheng* unties the rope and goes to the back to remove the jar and the vat. After *Wu Shi* awakens and notices the wet footsteps outside her

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[59] Ling 220.

window, she asks her son about the night soil. He mockingly replies, "I don't know, but by looking at these wet footsteps, I think they are most likely from a man's shoes. I think certainly this person is in such a hurry that he can't hold himself"
(不知道，但看這一路濕印，多是男人鞋跡，想必是個人，急出這些尿屎來的。)[60] After this occasion, the mother starts to see her son as a nail in her eye (眼中釘), which she wishes to get rid of as soon as possible.

Because of the inconveniences *Dasheng* has caused, the priest does not dare to visit the widow for a few days, but he sends his nineteen-year-old disciple, *Tai Su*, to *Wu Shi* to inquire about a future rendezvous. The disciple, however, takes this opportunity to flirt with the widow. Since *Wu Shi* is already fond of him, she pulls him over and kisses him.

Thinking about the possibility that she can have the priest and his two disciples all to herself, *Wu Shi* tells him of her intention to kill her only son, *Dasheng*. Although the priest asks her to reconsider, the heartless mother keeps this option open.

The third occasion happens when the priest pays another visit to *Wu Shi*. At night, when the son finds that the side door is only half closed, he locks the door, pulls up a chair, and sits by the entrance. An hour later when the priest tries to push open the door lightly and finds that it is locked, he knocks on the door and announces his presence. Knowing that the outsider is the priest, *Dasheng* imitates his mother's voice, saying that it is still inconvenient for the priest to show up. In the meantime, *Wu Shi* has waited a long time in her bedroom and finally sends her maid to the side door to look for her paramour. When the maid accidentally touches the son in the dark, *Dasheng* questions her presence, and the maid quickly leaves and reports back to his mother.

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[60] Ling 221.

The fourth occasion occurs when the disciple *Tai Qing* pays a visit to the widow on behalf of his master. Seeing *Tai Qing* walking into the household, *Dasheng* immediately confronts him and demands the reason for his presence. After hearing that the disciple has requested an audience with his mother, the son suggests that he will take the disciple's message. Once again, *Wu Shi* hears no news from the priest.

The fifth occasion happens after his mother successfully sneaks in her paramour. Noticing the priest's presence in the house, *Dasheng* wastes no time in opening the center door and beating on the fire *gong*, shouting "Theft!". Knowing that the nine neighbors will come to rescue, the unwelcome and embarrassed visitor can only rush out through the opened center door. He even loses a shoe after the son throws a rock at his leg. Because of this dangerous situation, the priest dares not come to visit anymore.

Finally, the sixth occasion occurs when the heartless mother resolves to get rid of her only son with the help of her paramour. On the anniversary of her husband's death, *Wu Shi* asks her son to bring her the paper money and to sweep his father's grave. She will then bring the dishes of food and follow him by taking a sedan chair. Knowing that his mother will make a stop at the monastery, *Dasheng* ignores his mother's instruction and goes straight to the monastery to wait for his mother's arrival. After *Wu Shi* arrives and unexpectedly finds her son there, *Dasheng* explains that since it is the anniversary of his father's death, he needs to see the so-called uncle to get two charms before going to the grave. After the priest writes two charms and burns them, *Dasheng* still refuses to go to the grave alone and demands to go along with his mother. Because of her son's demand, *Wu Shi* cannot stay behind at the monastery to carry out her previously planned tryst, but must leave with her son.

Because of the constant inconvenience caused by the son, *Wu Shi* and the priest think of a charge against *Dasheng*. Knowing that Governor *Li Jie* 李傑 of

Kaifeng 開封 hates any unfilial son, the priest suggests to the mother that he will go to the court to report *Dasheng*'s disobedience in refusing to go to his father's grave. When *Wu Shi* arrives at the court later, all she has to do is to agree with this accusation. After learning that *Dasheng* will be either beaten to death or be given a life sentence in prison, the lascivious and heartless mother immediately says,

> 'It has to be this way to be satisfactory. But after the death of my son, you have to treat me utterly sincerely, and do everything as I wish. If you are even a little bit uncertain, then I won't give up my very own son's life in vain!' The Taoist priest then asked, 'What do you mean as you wish?' *Wu Shi* replied, 'I need to sleep with you every night, and I can't sleep alone.' The Taoist priest then said, 'I still have other business to do in the monastery, how can I come every night?' *Wu Shi* replied, '[If] you have no time, then send a disciple over for my company, I can't stand to be alone by myself."
> 必如此，方停當。只是我兒子死後，你須至誠待我，凡百要像我意纔好。倘若有些好歹，却不枉送了親生兒子!知觀道：你要如何像意吳氏道：我夜夜須要同睡，不得獨宿。知觀道：我觀中還有別事，怎能勾夜夜來得？吳氏道：你没工夫，隨分着個徒弟來相伴，我耐不得獨自寂寞。[61]

After her son is brought to court, the heartless mother begs Governor *Li* to have her fifteen-year-old son beaten to death. She says, "I only beg you to pass judgment as soon as you can (good and quick), so I can be declared innocent" (只求老爺早早決絕，小婦人也得乾淨)[62] and "I am willing to live by myself, and don't want to have a son anymore"

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[61] Ling 227-8.
[62] Ling 230.

(小婦人情願自過日子，不情願有兒子了)[63]. Putting the young and beautiful, but ruthless, widow-mother and her silent son side by side, the doubting Governor *Li* asks the mother to bring in a coffin for her son's corpse the next day. After hearing the information gathered by his public servants, Governor *Li* then orders the priest to be beaten to death and places him into the coffin provided by *Wu Shi*. As well, the governor orders the two disciples to return to their parents, forbidding them to ever return to the monastery. When Governor *Li* also wishes to beat the widow-mother, *Dasheng* immediately rushes to cover her with his body, showing that he is more than willing to take the blows. Only after witnessing her son's intended sacrifice does the lewd and heartless mother realize her own faults.

Despite the death of her paramour and *Taisu* (after learning of the death of *Wu Shi* and having involuntary emissions in his dreams), *Wu Shi* does not receive any immediate punishment. However, after she learns that her paramour is dead and his disciples have been sent away, *Wu Shi* gradually becomes ill and passes away.

Kongzhao 空照, ***Jingzhen*** 靜眞, **and** ***Liaoyuan*** 了緣 **in** ***He Daqing weihen yuanyang tao*** 赫大卿遺恨鴛鴦絛 **(The Mandarin-Duck Girdle)**

Kongzhao and *Jingzhen*, along with *Liaoyuan*, are three licentious nuns living in two separate nunneries, the *Feikong An* 非空庵 and the *Jile An* 極樂庵, respectively. The accidental visit by the married, but equally young rake, *He Daqing* 赫大卿, turns *Feikong An* into a sexual battlefield.

Kongzhao and *Jingzhen* reside separately in the East Wing (*dongyuan* 東院) and the West Wing (*xiyuan* 西院) of the *Feikong An*. The youngest,

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[63] Ling Mengchu 凌濛初. "*Xishan Guan shelu du wanghun Kaifeng Fu beiguan zhui huoming* 西山觀設籙度亡魂 開封府備棺追活命," *Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection

Kongzhao, launches the sexual escapade as soon as she catches a glimpse of her handsome and lascivious visitor through the chink in the door, after he walks into the East Wing. Even before *Daqing* sets foot in the nunnery, he has already heard of the nun's renowned beauty. Therefore, from the moment he is received by *Kongzhao*, he shares a mutual physical interest. Like dry wood near a fire (*ganchai jinhuo* 乾柴近火), the two libertines light up immediately following the nun's invitation to go to her inner quarters for tea, her second round of tea serving upon his request, and her consent for him to look at the gauze curtains in her bedroom. *Kongzhao*'s atypical sexual preference includes the participation of her two young maids and *Liaoyuan* after the latter discovers her neighbors' sexcapade.

However, *Daqing*'s request to depart due to his poor health and his longing for his family, after a two-month stay in the nunneries, results in his eventual death. Despite his promise to return after four or five days, the shrewish nymphomaniac, *Jingzhen*, makes him drunk and then shaves off all of his hair and dresses him as a nun, so that *Daqing* is forced to prolong his stay until his hair grows back. Carrying on with his deteriorated health, *Daqing* not only has no time to recover, but also must continue to fight a sexual battle with the additional two young maids. Although the nuns think of either sending him home or fetching a doctor, when they consider the possible negative consequences, they elect to send their servant to describe the patient's ailment to a doctor and to procure a prescription, which ,of course, is utterly useless.

Daqing's final request for the delivery of his mandarin-duck girdle to his wife, in order to meet with her before his death, results in the nuns' eventual defeat. Fearing possible trouble, *Jingzhen* throws the girdle to the ceiling after *Kongzhao* mentions *Daqing*'s request, and asks her to lie that his wife refuses to come to see him. Therefore, after more than three months of carnal enjoyment, *Daqing* pays with his death and improper burial: the nuns dress him as a nun, place

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of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders) (Taibei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1982) 230.

him in an old nun's coffin, remove it to the back garden, put it in an empty plot, pour lime over it, and cover it with earth, all without caring whether the day is auspicious for a burial.

At the same time, *Daqing*'s wife, *Lu Shi* 陸氏, is searching for her husband. One day, when *Lu Shi* is inspecting the repairs being made on their house following the autumn rain, she spots a workman who is wearing her husband's girdle. The workman, *Kuai San* 蒯三, explains how he picked up the girdle when he was repairing the roof tiles in the East Wing of *Feikong An*, and that he accidentally saw two young maids in the *Feikong An* imitating copulation. Later, after *Jingzheng* mercilessly beats her maid for carelessness, the maid tells what she knows about *He Daqing*'s death. All this information prompts *Lu Shi* to lead a party of excavators to dig up her husband's coffin in the *Feikong An*. Although the nuns and their servants all take refuge to the *Jile An* for shelter, they are captured and sent to court.

Lu Shi's is initially unable to recognize her feminized husband's corpse and decides to return to court, but a greedy workman, *Mao Popi* 毛潑皮, decides to lag behind, hoping to find something of value inside the coffin. He accidentally causes *Daqing*'s trousers to slip off. *Mao Popi* then reports to the court that the corpse was in fact a monk. Because of his revelation, *Kongzhao* and *Jingzheng* are immediately accused of the murder of the monk *Qufei* 去非, who is also a missing person but who is involved in a second court case involving *Liaoyuan* and the monk *Qufei* from *Wanfa Si* 萬法寺. When *He Daqing*'s murder is finally revealed, the court orders the beheading of *Kongzhao* and *Jingzheng*, and the two maids of the East Wing are degraded and sold as public prostitutes after receiving eighty lashes. As well, the maid from the West Wing is returned to a secular life, the two porters receive the bastinado, and finally, the *Feikong An* is demolished and all of its property confiscated.

After the murder of *He Daqing* is finally exposed, the murder charge in the second case is dropped. This case involves a charge against the old monk *Jueyuan* 覺圓 by the parents of his disciple *Qufei*. Not knowing that the young nun in court is in fact *Qufei*, whom *Liaoyuan* has dressed as a nun, everyone leaves the court after *He Daqing*'s murder case is closed, although *Liaoyuan* receives a minor charge for sheltering the culprits. However, when *Qufei* sees that his father is being pummelled by the other disciples after he rains blows on the old monk's head, the disguised nun cannot restrain himself and rushes over to intervene; his rescue then reveals *Liaoyuan*'s entire scheme. For punishment, *Liaoyuan* is sold as a harlot after receiving forty lashes, her *Jile An* is demolished, and *Qufei* is banished after receiving an equal number of lashes.

Liang Shengjin 梁聖金 **in** ***Ren xiaozi liexing wei shen*** 任孝子烈性爲神 (The Ardent *Ren* the filial son to be a god)

Sheng Jin is the beautiful wife of *Ren Gui* 任珪, a herb-store manager. Although they have been married for three years, *Sheng Jin* still longs to reunite with her previous paramour, the lascivious *Zhou De* 周得. Her longing is well-known in her parents' neighborhood and is also the reason why her parents married her to a man from afar in order to avoid rumors. Unfortunately, the honest and hard-working husband is completely ignorant of his wife's licentious history. Because of her lustful desire to have a reunion with *Zhou De* to rekindle her previous fires of passion, *Sheng Jin* uses her charm to lure *Ren Gui* into a dangerous and compromising situation.

In the first instance, *Sheng Jin* applies her charm to deceive her husband about the nature of *Zhou De*'s subsequent visit. After their first rendezvous, *Zhou De* does not return for two months due to a court charge, but when he reappears,

the two adulterers immediately plunge into an act of lust. As a result, the *femme fatale* forgets to make lunch for her blind father-in-law, *Ren Gong* 任公, who informs *Ren Gui* that his wife is probably having an affair upstairs with her so-called relative. When *Ren Gui* questions his wife, she becomes exasperated and says, "My parents, who have no sense, married me to this place. Never expect them to visit me; instead, others come to gossip."[64] *Ren Gui* feels guilty for his distrust and comforts *Sheng Jin*, asking her for forgiveness. His submission prompts her to fall into his arms and have sex with him in order to make him forget his previous suspicions about her.

The second instance occurs following *Zhou De*'s suggestion to *Sheng Jin* that she should find a way to encourage her husband to send her back to her parent's home, where she and *Zhou De* can be together. Specifically, *Sheng Jin* is to capture a cat and place it inside her clothing. When the cat attempts to escape, its paws will scratch her breasts. Then *Sheng Jin* can inform her husband that when he was at work, his old, blind father attempted to rape her, and her resistance to his advances caused the scratches on her chest. *Zhou De*'s wicked plan succeeds only too well: *Ren Gui* agrees to send her back to her parents and is too angry to speak to his father about his daughter-in-law's accusation.

However, one night, *Ren Gui* is too late to leave the city, and he has no choice but to stay in *Sheng Jin*'s parents' house. *Sheng Jin* and *Zhou De* sleep together, so *Zhou De* must hide in the bathroom when *Ren Gui* enters the bedroom. When *Ren Gui* announces a need to use the privy, *Zhou De* immediately calls out, "Theft!" *Sheng Jin*, her parents, and even the maid begin to beat *Ren Gui* with a stick so that the adulterer can escape. The adultery between *Sheng Jin* and *Zhou De* finally becomes clear to *Ren Gui*. Gossipers confirm their long-term illicit affair and suggest that *Ren Gui* should murder them with a knife. Consequently, *Ren Gui* decides to kill his wife and her lover.

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[64] Feng, *Yushi* 435.

Before he carries out his plan, the furious husband goes to the temple with his knife and a white hen to reveal their adultery and ask for a prediction. After *Ren Gui* kills the hen, its body jumps five times, signaling that *Ren Gui* will murder five people. Ignoring the advice of his father and employer and with his emotions in turmoil, *Ren Gui* beheads not only the two libertines, but also *Sheng Jin*'s parents and the maid, confirming the prophecy at the temple.

Ren Gui's earlier prayer in the temple, his volunteered confession to the court, and his willingness to accept his murder charges move Heaven before his execution. In the end, he passes away in a Buddhist's sitting posture.

Xiuxiu 秀秀 in *Cui daizhao shengsi yuanjia* 崔待詔生死冤家 (Artisan *Ts'ui* and His Ghost Wife)

With her beauty and her marvelous, elegant embroidery, *Xiuxiu* 秀秀 becomes the embroidery maidservant (*yangniang* 養娘) in the household of the prince of *Xianan* 咸安. The prince promises that when her term is finished, he will give her hand in marriage to the jade carver who carved a jade Avalokiteshvara for the prince to give to the emperor.

The burning of the prince's house panics all of the characters. Like the others, *Xiuxiu* also flees the destruction, but collides with *Cui Ning*, the jade carver. Her unabashed determination and her aggressiveness force *Cui Ning* to take her away from the confusing situation. After he rejects her suggestion that they become "husband and wife" during the same night, she threatens to ruin his reputation if he does not agree to the forcible union, leaving him with no choice but to submit to her coercion.

Following their elopement, the couple must relocate several times to avoid detection, but they are soon discovered by Private *Guo* (*Guo Paijun* 郭排軍) and

are brought back to the prince for punishment. *Xiuxiu* is subjected to death by beating and is buried in his back garden. In order to escape punishment, *Cui Ning* first claims that *Xiuxiu* put his hands on her breasts and threatened to ruin his name if he did not agree to her request, and second, he lies that the maiden demanded their elopement. Nevertheless, *Cui Ning* still suffers a severe beating, followed by his banishment.

However, *Cui Ning* could never have known that *Xiuxiu* would return as a ghost. When *Xiuxiu* repeatedly calls to him, in spite of his turning a deaf ear to her voice, he listens to her lies of receiving thirty lashes in the backyard and then being sent away. Then *Cui Ning* allows her to follow him, and they live together with her parents.

The same jade Avalokiteshvara which brought the couple together in the human world is the same token which brings them together in the netherworld. Because one of the jade bells on the Avalokiteshvara falls off, the prince once again sends Private *Kuo* to look for *Cui Ning* to repair it. After Private *Kuo* sees *Xiuxiu* for the second time and reports back to the prince, he then orders Private *Kuo* and two sedan bearers on duty to bring her back, but when they lift up the curtain of the sedan chair, *Xiuxiu* simply disappears. The prince then becomes so irritated that he has Private *Kuo* beaten with fifty lashes. Following the prince's questioning, *Cui Ning* at last realizes that *Xiuxiu* and her parents are ghosts (her parents drowned themselves in the river after hearing of the death of their daughter's death). Following his revelation, *Xiuxiu* strangles her beloved on the spot and pulls him into the netherworld with her parents.

Concluding Remarks

Existing for centuries in both the Orient and the Occident, the *femme fatale*

(*hongyan huoshui* 紅顏禍水) as a beautiful, disastrous icon never ceases to capture people's infatuation with her dangerous beauty. In spite of two misogynistic proverbs, "Beautiful women usually die young" (*hongyan zigu duo boming* 紅顏自古多薄命) and "The lust for women at any time brings the possibility of calamity" (*nuse conglai shi huotai* 女色從來是禍胎), men are continuously attracted to the *femme fatale*'s mysterious aura of charm regardless of the consequences.

Nevertheless, Feng Menglong's *Sanyan* and Ling Mengchu's *Erpai* reveal that *femmes fatales* are not all the same. Rather, they can be categorized into three distinct groups according to the kind of retribution they receive. The degree to which the protagonist's devious behavior injures its victim results in an equally severe and proportionate reprisal following the carnal hedonism, with the most extreme penalty being expulsion to the underworld. My analyses of seventeen femmes fatales from fifteen stories in the two anthologies reveals that the dispositional type, whose aura of charm attracts men, usually receives some kind of reward; the situational type, who lures men into dangerous or compromising situations, usually receives an ambiguous or fatal retribution; and the deviational type, who is the prisoner of her own lustful desires, always receives a fatal retribution. Hence, by categorizing the *femmes fatales* into three types, we can view them as three distinct kinds of female characters.

One may question how close is the association between the three types of *femmes fatales* appeared in *Sanyan Erpai* to women in real life? I may say their resemblance are very close on two accounts. First, some of the stories appear in the two anthologies are based on real characters lived their life during the *Song* and *Yuan* Dynasties. Second, the appearances of different categories of women, from the gentry women (wives and maidens) to the social outcasts (courtesans and prostitutes) do exist in reality. Hence, the didactic messages convey by Feng

Menglong and Ling Mengchu are very persuasive.

In compared to the gentry poetess in late imperial China whom receive a vast research from female scholars (Kang-I Sun Chang, Dorothy Ko, Susan Mann, Ellen Widmer, and Yenna Wu) in recent years, *femmes fatales* in Chinese short fiction are still in its embryonic stage. In addition to further research, I hope that my thesis will shed some light on this class of women.

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Appendix A

The Distribution of "Dispositional" type of *Femme Fatale* in *Sanyan Erpai*

Yushi mingyan 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World)

Sanqiaoer 三巧兒 in *Jiang Xingge chonghui zhenzhushan* 蔣興哥重會珍珠衫 (The Pearl Shirt Reencountered,)[1] *juan* 1

Jingshi tongyan 警世通言 (Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World)

Yutangchun 玉堂春 in *Yutangchun lolan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫 [*Yutangchun* Meets with her Husband in Distress,] *juan* 24.

Zhao Chuner 趙春兒 in *Zhao Chuner zhongwang Chao jiazhuan* 趙春兒重旺曹家莊 [*Zhao Chuner* Re-prospers the House of *Cao*,] *juan* 31.

Du Shiniang 杜十娘 in *Du Shiniang nuchen baibao xiang* 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 (*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger,)[2] *juan* 32.

Wang Jiaoluan 王嬌鸞 in *Wang Jiaoluan bainian changhen* 王嬌鸞百年長恨 [The Hundred Years Hatred of *Wang Jiaoluan*,] *juan* 34.

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[2] Richard M. W. Ho, trans., "*Tu Shih-niang* Sinks the Jewel Box in Anger," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 146-60.
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***Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Lasting Words to Awaken the World)**

Wang Meiniang 王美娘 in *Maiyoulang duzhan Huakui* 賣油郎獨占花魁 (The Oil Peddler Courts the Courtesan,)[3] *juan* 3.

***Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

Wu Niangzi 巫娘子 in *Jiuxiajiu Zhao Niao mihua jizhongji Jia Xiucai baoyuan* 酒下酒趙尼媼迷花　機中機賈秀才報怨 [Old Nun *Zhao* Bewilders the Flower with Wine After Wine, *Jia* The Graduate Revenges with Tactic Within Tactic,] *juan* 6.

***Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

Zheng Ruizhu 鄭蕊珠 in *Xu Chajiu chengnao jie xinren Zheng Ruizhu mingyuan wan jiuan* 徐茶酒乘鬧劫新人　鄭蕊珠鳴冤完舊案 [*Xu* The Steward Takes Advantage of the Bustle and Kidnaps the Bride, *Zheng Ruizhu* Cries out for Redress and Completes the Old Case,] *juan* 25.

Chen shi 陳氏 in *Cheng Zhaofeng danyu wutoufu Wang Tongpan shuangxue buming yuan* 程朝奉單遇無頭婦　王通判雙雪不明冤 [Wealthy *Cheng* Alone Encounters a Headless Woman, sub-Prefect *Wang* for Twice cannot Clear the Unclear Charge,] *juan* 28.

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[3] Lorraine S. Y. Lieu and the editors, trans., "The Oil Peddler Courts the Courtesan," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 177-208.
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Appendix B

The Distribution of "Situational" type of *Femme Fatale* in *Sanyan Erpai*

***Yushi mingyan* 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World)**

Jinnu 金奴 in *Xinqiaoshi Han Wu mai chunqing* 新橋市韓五賣春情 (*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charm at the New Bridge Market,)[1] *juan* 3.

Chen Yulan 陳玉蘭 in *Xianyun An Ruan San chang yuanzhai* 閒雲菴阮三償冤債 [*Yuan* the Third Repays an Injustice Debt in the Idle Cloud Nunnery,] *juan* 4.

***Jingshi tongyan* 警世通言 (Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World)**

Zhou Chunxiang 周春香 in *Qiao Yanjie yiqie pojia* 喬彥傑一妾破家 [The Concubine of *Qiao Yanjie* Ruins His Family,] *juan* 33.

***Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恒言 (Lasting Words to Awaken the World)**

***Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

***Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

Zhao Xianjun 趙縣君 in *Zhao Xianjun qiaosong huanggan Wu Xuanjiao ganchang baiqiang* 趙縣君喬送黃柑 吳宣教乾償白鏹 [Madam *Zhao* Pretends to send Yellow Oranges, Officer *Wu*'s Paid Unfair Money in Vain,] *juan* 14.

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[1]Robert C. Miller and the editors, trans., "*Han Wu-niang* Sells Her Charm at the New Bridge Market," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 312-24.
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Appendix C

The Distribution of "Deviational" type of *Femme Fatale* in *Sanyan Erpai*

Yushi mingyan 喻世明言 (Illustrious Words to Instruct the World)

Liu Suxiang 劉素香 in *Zhang Shunmei dengxiao de linu*
張舜美燈宵得麗女 [*Zhang Shunmei* obtains a beauty in the night of Lanterns,] *juan* 23.

Liu Jintan 劉金壇 in *Yang Siwen Yanshan feng guren*
楊思溫燕山逢故人 [*Yang Siwen* meets with his deceased friend in the Mount of Swallow,] *juan* 24.

Liang Shengjin 梁聖金 in *Ren xiaozi liexing wei shen* 任孝子烈性爲神 [The ardent *Ren* the filial son to be a god,] *juan* 38.

Jingshi tongyan 警世通言 *(Comprehensive Words to Admonish the World)*

Tian Shi 田氏 in *Zhuang Zi xiu gupen cheng dadao*
莊子休鼓盆成大道 [*Zhuang Zi* desists to drum the basin for establishing the Great Way,][1] *juan 2.*

Xiuxiu 秀秀 in *Cui daizhao shengsi yuanjia* 崔待詔生死冤家 (Artisan *Ts'ui* and His Ghost Wife,)[2] *juan* 8.

Yasi Niang 押司娘 in *San xianshen Bao Longtu duanyuan*
三現身包龍圖斷冤 (The Ghost Came Thrice,)[3] *juan* 13.

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[2] Conrad Lung, trans., "Artisan Ts'ui and His Ghost Wife," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 252-62.
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[3] Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, "The Ghost Came Thrice," Lazy Dragon: Chinese Stories from the Ming Dynasty (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1981) 47-65.

Xiao furen 小夫人 in *Xiao furen jinqian zeng nianshao* 小夫人金錢贈年少(*Chang*, The Honest Steward,)[4] *juan* 16.

Gongren 恭人 in *Ji Yafan jinman chanhuo* 計押番金鰻產禍 [*Ji* the military officer begets a disaster with a gold eel,] *juan* 20.

Pi Shi 皮氏 in *Yutangchun luolan fengfu* 玉堂春落難逢夫 [*Yutangchun* meets with her husband in distress,] *juan* 24.

Bai Niangzi 白娘子 in *Bai Niangzi yongzhen Leifeng Ta* 白娘子永鎮雷峯塔(Eternal Prisoner under the Thunder Peak Pagoda,)[5] *juan* 28.

Li Yingying 李鶯鶯 in *Suxiang Ting Zhang Hao yu Yingying* 宿香亭張浩遇鶯鶯 [*Zhang Hao* meets with *Yingying* in Nightly Fragrance Pavilion,] *juan* 29.

Shao Shi 邵氏 in *Kuang Taishou duansi haier* 況太守斷死孩兒 (The Case of the Dead Infant,)[6] *juan* 35.

Jiang Shuzhen 蔣淑眞 in *Jiang Shuzhen wenjing yuanyang hui* 蔣淑眞刎頸鴛鴦會 [*Jiang Shuzhen* cuts her throat in the mandarin ducks' encounter,] *juan* 38.

Xingshi hengyan 醒世恒言 (Lasting Words to Awaken the World)

Han Furen 韓夫人 in *Kanpi xue danzheng Erlang Shen* 勘皮靴單證二郎神(The Book That Reveals the Culprit,)[7] *juan* 13.

Kongzhao 空照, *Jingzhen* 靜眞, and *Liaoyuan* 了緣 in *He Daqing yihen yuanyang tao* 赫大卿遺恨鴛鴦絛 (The Mandarin-duck Girdle,)[8] *juan* 15.

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[4] Richard F. S. Yang, "Chang, The Honest Steward (志誠張主管)," Eight Colloquial Tales of the Sung 宋人話本八種 (Taibei: The China Post, 1972) 135-54.
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[5] Diana Yu, trans., "Eternal Prisoner under the Thunder Peak Pagoda," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 355-78.

[6] C. T. Hsia and Susan Arnold Zonana, trans., "The Case of the Dead Infant," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 122-34.

[7] Lorraine S. Y. Lieu and the editors, trans., "The Book That Reveals the Culprit," Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations, eds. Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 1986) 505-23.

Pan Shouer 潘壽兒 in *Lu Wuhan yingliu hese xie* 陸五漢硬留合色鞋 (The Error of the Embroidered Slipper,)[9] *juan* 16.

He Xiue 賀秀娥 in *Wu Yanei linzhou fuyue* 吳衙內鄰舟赴約 (Love in a Junk,)[10] *juan* 28.

Ai Da'er 愛大兒 in *Yi wenqian xiaoxi zao qiyuan* 一文錢小隙造奇冤 [A small quarrel over a coin creates a strange wrong,] *juan* 34.

***Chuke paian jingqi* 初刻拍案驚奇 (The First Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

Wu Shi 吳氏 in *Xishan Guan shelu du wanghun Kaifeng Fu beiguan zhui huoming* 西山觀設籙度亡魂 開封府備棺追活命 [The priest of the West Mountain sets up a list to save to lost soul The prefect of *Kaifeng* prepares a coffin to chase after the alive,] *juan* 17.

Du Shi 杜氏 in *Duo fengqing cunfu juanqu jia tianyu muliao duanyu* 奪風情村婦捐軀 假天語幕僚斷獄 [The usurpation of her dissipation causes the country woman to sacrifice her life The pretended Heavenly words leads the private secretary to decide criminal case,] *juan* 26.

Di Shi 狄氏 in *Qiao duihuan huzi xuanyin xian baoshi woshi ruding* 喬兌換胡子宣淫 顯報施臥師入定 [By disguising the exchange Mr. Wu proclaims licentiousness By manifesting the bestowment the priest enters into the contemplative state,] *juan* 32.

Jingguan 靜觀 in *Wenren sheng yezhan Cuifu An Jingguan ni huajin Huangsha Long* 聞人生野戰翠浮庵 靜觀尼畫錦黃沙衚 [Mr. *Wenren* [fights] an openly battle in *Cuifu* Nunnery *Jingguan* the nun flowerly paints the *Huangsha Long*,] *juan* 34.

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[8] H. Acton and Lee Yi-hsieh, "The Mandarin-duck Girdle," Four Cautionary Tales (London: John Lehmann, Ltd., 1947) 103-45.

[9] George Soulie de Morant, "The Error of the Embroidered Slipper," Chinese Love Tales (New York: Illustsrated Editions Company, 1935) 85-108.

[10] H. Acton and Lee Yi-hsieh, "Love in a Junk," Four Cautionary Tales (London: John Lehmann, Ltd., 1947) 15-45.
George Soulie de Morant, "The Wedding of *Ya-nei*," Chinese Love Tales (New York: Illustsrated Editions Company, 1935) 43-63.

***Erke paian jingqi* 二刻拍案驚奇 (The Second Collection of Striking the Table in Amazement at the Wonders)**

Dong Ruren 董孺人 in *Lu shijun qinggou huanjia qi Wu taishou yipei rumen nu* 呂使君情媾宦家妻 吳太守義配儒門女, *juan* 7.

Jiao Wenji 焦文姬 in *Man shaoqing jifu baoyang Jiao Wenji shengchou sibao* 滿少卿飢附飽颺 焦文姬生仇死報, *juan* 11.

Fang Enniang 房恩娘 in *Lutai An keren zuo sizhu Shanxi Li jiugui jie xinshi* 鹿胎菴客人作寺主 剡溪里舊鬼借新屍, *juan* 13.

Zhenjing 眞靜 in *Xu chayuan ganmeng qinseng Wangshi zi yinfeng huodao* 許察院感夢擒僧 王氏子因風獲盜, *juan* 21.

Mo Dajie 莫大姐 in *Liang cuoren Mo Dajie siben zai chengjiao Yang Erlang zhengben* 兩錯認莫大姐私奔 再成交楊二郎正本, *juan* 38.